Week ending May 24 1952
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JOHN BULL

THE HAPPY HUNTED: Escape story of Brigadier Clifton, who ignored Rommel's warning

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Your cup of tea

THE KETTLE IS NEVER far from the hob in a British home. The 50,000,000 people in this country drink more tea than the rest of the world put together.

So the Minister of Food's plan to raise the tea ration from 2 oz. to 2½ oz. a week, and his hopes of doing away with rationing altogether by the end of the year, should cheer, if not inebriate.

But very great care must be taken lest derationing, when it comes, should prove a flop like the unfortunate experiment with sweets three years ago.

Remember what happened? People who had time and money emptied the shops of sweets. They stuffed and hoarded. The stocks which, it was hoped, would be big enough to tide over the first rush were soon exhausted.

Rationing by coupon was thus replaced with a chaotic "rationing by queue"—which meant that many people got no sweets at all.

Even the manufacturers who had pressed for derationing admitted that their estimates had been wrong and were relieved when the old system was restored.

FIRST stage in the derationing plan is the ending of the tea subsidy on June 15. That will add eightpence a pound to the shop price, and it could go up by tenpence before hitting the controlled "ceiling."

The tea trade has promised not to profiteer, and to keep plenty of tea on sale at not more than 4s. a pound compared with the present average retail price of 3s. 8d.

If that promise were not kept, it would be up to housewives to complain loudly and to the Food Minister to take action.

He will, in any case, be watching the effect of the higher price on demand, for a reduced demand would bring derationing nearer.

Probably there will be no difference while the ration stays at two ounces. But on August 10 the next stage is due—the increase to two and a half ounces weekly.

Even then we may not feel the pinch enough to buy less tea, for before the war we averaged nearly three ounces a week each, and the experts think we should buy that much again if tea were derationed.

Three ounces a head per week before the war meant importing 510 million pounds a year. Last year we imported only 452 million pounds. So derationing would call for about sixty million pounds extra, to bring it only to the prewar level.

CAN we get it? India and Ceylon made great efforts during the war to increase their tea production to compensate for the loss of the Dutch East Indies to the Japanese. With the help of chemical manure they squeezed a fifty per cent higher yield from existing trees. But growers fear that the trees may get "tired" and the quality subsequently lowered.

There are new plantations, too, of course. But new trees take at least three years to bear a brewable leaf, and ten years have to pass before full bearing is possible. The new plantations in British East Africa are not yet producing substantial quantities.

Indonesia, which exported only six million pounds after her liberation in 1946, is now up to eighty-eight million. But this is only half her prewar figure, and the spoliation of tea estates during the war means that she will never again export as much.

The tea habit is increasing elsewhere. U.S. consumption has risen from a prewar eighty-five million pounds to one hundred million.

DESPITE these difficulties the British tea trade, now restored to private merchants, is confident it can fill our caddies and keep them filled.

If it can sell enough tea at reasonable prices, derationing will be welcome and successful.

But it must not be done merely to substitute "rationing by price"—which means that poorer people, and especially the old age pensioners, go short.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

GRANT TIGNER, a thirty-one year old American, came to Britain last year after a painting trip through Spain, where he also enjoyed his favourite hobby, small-boat sailing. Tigner likes England fine and plans to stay a while. He was enthusiastic about his first trip to the London Zoo, scene of his cover painting. "Watching the people react to the animals was fun," he says. "It was funnier still, vice versa."

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FREE SPEECH

TV dangers in the schoolroom

IN THE SAME BREATH as we are told of cuts in school costs, meaning less books and less paper for children to use, we hear of television being introduced into schools as an experiment. I am not an embittered old diehard but a young teacher with three years' experience, and I think this a dangerous trend.

Children are now catered for to such an extent that they lose initiative in work and play. With fewer books to write in, less time to learn to read or handle figures, education is cutting its own throat. Books cannot compete with films, radio and television, and the desire to read is waning. I can visualize a world in which only the few can read or write, a flashback to the Middle Ages when books for the masses were in no demand.—SCHOOLMASTER, London, N.7.

Two-year-old Songster

RECENTLY I READ of a two-year-old girl who could sing "Lily Of Laguna." My son, aged two years and one month, can do a bit better. He can sing, in perfect tune, fifty-seven songs. There may be more, as nearly every day he strikes up another popular number.—MRS. J. E. PRATTEN, Flat 70, Wrattesley Park, The Wergs, Wolverhampton.

Making Goldfish Happy

KEEPING THE WATER fresh and clear in my goldfish tank is causing me a lot of trouble. There are six fish in a six-gallon tank. I have water snails which leave a jelly-like substance on the side of the tank, and some greenstuff, which

people tell me should be used only with running water. There is red lead in the putty of the tank.—L. HOBELL, 14 Ferrars Road, Sheffield.

An expert comments: "The tank is overcrowded. It is big enough for only two fish. Quarter to half the water should be changed every ten days by siphoning from the bottom. Greenstuff anchored in aquarium gravel or compost is beneficial. Jelly-like substance probably contains spawn, but six snails in a six-gallon tank are sufficient. A small amount of red lead in the putty of the tank is not harmful."

August Holiday Rush

YOUR CORRESPONDENT WHO asked ("Free Speech," May 31) why people who have no children of school age take their holidays in August, does not realize that many people cannot choose the time for their holiday but must take it in accordance with the schedule for their own industry. In this city, there are many thousands who cannot choose the time for their holiday. My husband is one of them.—MRS. A. THOMPSON, 67 Ermington Crescent, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham.

. . . Don't forget that by August the sea is warmer.—F. E. BROWN, 54 Cranston Gardens, London, E.4.

. . . Many people like to be on holiday with crowds and find an "out-of-season" holiday very dull.—ROBERT H. JONES, 48 Kenesley Road, Coventry.

. . . Do store cupboards provide one reason for the August rush? Mine fills up like this: June, strawberries and gooseberries; July, raspberries, loganberries, black currants and red currants; late August, Victoria plums; September, blackberries, apples, tomatoes and chutney. A full cupboard means hard work—and a fortnight's break in early August.—MRS. N. E. WOLFE, 26 Coniston Road, Bromley, Kent.

Girls Who Never Relax

HAVING WORKED IN various jobs with a number of young girls, I notice that, with very few exceptions, they do not have the art of relaxing gracefully. They fiddle with their hair, sprawl with

their feet up, never seem to sit properly or be able to keep still. What a pity if women are forgetting how to relax.—MRS. C. DOBSON, 2 Roxburgh Terrace, Edinburgh.

Exporting At Home

CHANGING DOLLARS FOR pounds in an American bank on a U.S. Air Force base is part of my job. Until recently, the American Serviceman could get tax stamps to the value of £1 with every £3 he purchased, to be used when buying taxable articles. Now someone has stepped in and stopped this scheme. I think they are making a big mistake. It won't improve Anglo-American relations and, while we are making enormous efforts to get our goods sold in the United States without tax, it seems strange that we should refuse to sell to Americans here tax free.—W. E. DOUBLE, 3 Council Houses, Blaxhall, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

Customs and Excise say this scheme is for American and Canadian tourists who are leaving the country within three months. It was never intended that it should be used by Servicemen.

Groundsman's Nightmare

WILFRED GREATOREX'S FINE article "Cup Final Groundsman" (JOHN BULL, May 3) drew attention to a little-known side of sport. I agree with all he says about the "sacred" turf of Wembley and the exacting job of its upkeep. I particularly liked the remarks about the so-called experts who test the turf with feet or hands before a game. Most people think that all a groundsman's job consists of is mowing, rolling and watering. Nothing is farther from the truth. The work has become scientific and playing turf must be nursed through all sorts of weather, which may be excessively wet or extremely dry. Under such conditions, turf maintenance becomes a nightmare.—ALBERT BURTON, Hon. Secretary, Nottinghamshire branch, National Association of Groundsmen, 42 Station Road, Carlton, Nottingham.

Marriage To A Parson

DOCTOR'S WIFE'S LETTER ("Free Speech," May 3), telling of some of her tribulations, has made me think how similar it is to the life of a clergyman's wife, who also has often to keep meals waiting an hour or more, when her husband is called out to cheer a sad one, comfort a sick one, sign a form, or say a prayer for someone in hospital. These are only some of the many calls which come the way of a clergyman. His wife must always be prepared to entertain unexpected visitors, has to know the answer to all inquiries, and be able to give advice and book dates for weddings and christenings. She must fill any vacancy at a church function, is always watched and not expected to want any outing or pleasure outside the church. Above all, she must remember that when at home her overworked husband needs peace in which to prepare for all the services which are his responsibility. — MINISTER'S WIDOW, Lancs.

Piano Stool Housewife

SOME WEEKS AGO, I hurt my leg badly and was advised not to stand up more than I could help. As I am a busy housewife, I have tried to do my work sitting down. I have found that, with the aid of an old revolving piano stool, it is possible to do many jobs this way. When washing up or ironing, for instance, it is surprising to find how often a turn or half-turn of the stool takes me to where I want to be.—MRS. A. RIGG, Three Hares Inn, Bilborough, York.

"Lending" The Garden

A FRIEND OF MINE has a very large garden which she "loans" once a week to friends and relatives and their children. They bring their own refreshments and picnic if they wish—a great boon to those living in flats or rooms without a garden.—J. H., Bristol.

Medicine Down The Sink

HOW MANY PEOPLE realize the waste of medicines that goes on daily? Patients get a prescription from their doctor for some minor ailment. They take it to a chemist, who suggests that they call back later for the medicine. In many cases they do not do so, as the ailment has passed off in the meantime. At the end of the month, the uncollected medicines are poured down the sink.—DOCTOR, Notts.

The Passion Flower

PASSION FLOWERS, I had always thought, were so-called because of their heady perfume or some romantic

A Passion Flower

association. But I am told that the name refers to the Crucifixion. Is this correct?—MRS. K. P., Lancs.

The passion flower got its name from the supposed resemblance of the corona to Jesus's crown of thorns, and of other parts of the flower to nails and wounds. The five sepals and five petals were regarded as symbols of the twelve Apostles—minus Peter and Judas.

Joys Of Dusting

DUSTING IS MORE OF A pleasure to a housewife than your correspondent who derides it ("Free Speech," May 3) seems to think. Each piece of china, each photograph she moves reminds her of something or someone. Dusting my treasures is the nicest part of my housework. — MRS. G. S. VAUGHAN, 65 Aspasia Road, Guildford, Surrey.

Letters intended for publication should be marked "Free Speech" and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

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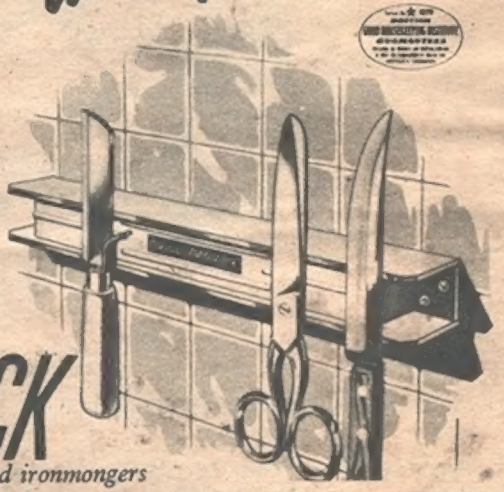

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THE HAPPY HUNTED by Brigadier GEORGE CLIFTON, D.S.O., M.C.

I escape on the Rome Express

The captured V.I.P. whose pluck Rommel admired makes another dash for freedom

MY RECAPTURE IN THE Western Desert by the three young Panzer officers delighted the Germans; mainly because my knowledge of Rommel's headquarters and of other matters would have embarrassed them very much if I had "returned to duty."; partly, too, because my escape at Mersa Matruh was from Germans—and they would have been embarrassed, in a different sense, if Italians had caught me.

Driving down to Rommel's headquarters, we saw his escort fighter squadron circling like hawks, while his Storch "taxi" slipped down quietly on to the saltpan. It flew off again immediately to the nightly parking strip, probably at Daba. We walked across to the Field Marshal's caravan, where he was evidently receiving various reports from four or five officers. With what one can only

Ahead lay the Swiss frontier. As I hastened to pay the cab driver, the two Alpini appeared—rifles at the ready

ILLUSTRATION BY GORDON HORNER

Brigadier Clifton (in 1951) revisits Como. He was captured here while trying to cross to Switzerland

describe as adoration glowing in their dusty faces, the three Panzer lads saluted and stood rigidly at attention while their major launched most graphically into the miserable story. As far as I could gather, he ended by suggesting seven days' home leave. Rommel commended them, shook hands with everyone and dismissed the party—without any leave. His war was not going well enough for such luxuries.

As at our earlier meeting, he opened our conversation with a harangue about British "gangster methods" of fighting. This time it concerned a high-level attack by Allied bombers on a hospital ship outside Tobruk, one of those accidents of war which happen much more frequently than one imagines. Rommel then went on: "I do not blame you for escaping; that is your duty. If I had been in your position I would have done the same." He was dressed in tight fieldboots and breeches, and his figure was definitely not that of a hiker. Appreciating this, I replied, "I am quite sure you would try, sir, but I do not believe you could have walked as far, or as fast, as I did."

Rommel came back at once. "No. I would have had more sense and borrowed a motor car." Trick to him.

"I quite agree, sir," I replied, "but with only a few seconds' start it was impossible, although I had the right vehicle marked down."

"Anyway, you are a nuisance," said Rommel. "We cannot waste time hunting prisoners as well as gazelle. If you attempt to escape again, you will be shot—escaping. I am sending you to Rome by air tomorrow. Good night—and good luck." He turned and entered his caravan.

As Rommel Saw Me

Rommel's account of our two meetings is of interest. It is extracted from Desmond Young's book, *Rommel*, and proves that my story is not merely shooting a line.

"A night attack on the 10th Italian Corps cost the British particularly heavy losses, including many dead. There were also 200 prisoners, among them Brigadier Clifton, commanding the 6th New Zealand Brigade. I had a conversation with him on the following morning. He had just been busy convincing the Italians that they must surrender, in view of the strong British tank forces facing their position, and the Italians had already taken the bolts out of their rifles, when, to his annoyance, a German officer had arrived and his plan came to nothing.

"He seemed extremely depressed as a result. I tackled him about various acts, contrary to international law, committed by New Zealand troops. Clifton showed absolute certainty of victory, which was understandable now that our attack had been beaten back. He was an old African veteran, for he had led British troops against us since 1940, had been in Greece, and was also in the winter fighting of 1941-42.

"He impressed us as a very brave man and very likeable. He insisted on becoming a prisoner of the Germans and not being sent to Italy. I tried to carry out his wish and, evading general instructions, handed him over to a German depot in Mersa Matruh. However, the Supreme Headquarters later ordered that he should be handed over to the Italians.

"But on the evening before he was due to be handed to the Italians, Clifton asked to go to the lavatory, where he got out of the window and vanished without trace. All troops were at once warned by wireless. A few days later, some of my staff officers were hunting gazelle when they suddenly saw a weary foot-traveller coming across the desert carrying what seemed to be a water-bottle in his hand. Closer observation revealed him as the much-sought-after Clifton. He was at once arrested and brought in to us again. I expressed to him my recognition of his courage; for not every man would contemplate such a trek through the desert. He looked very exhausted, which was not surprising. To stop any more attempts to escape, I had him sent at once to Italy."

Western Desert, 1942. Clifton, his legs and arms cut, with one of the Germans who caught him after a six-day escape through the desert

Desert Slimming

When Rommel left, I limped off, under guard, back to the small tent in which I had spent two very depressing nights immediately after my first capture about a week before. Early next morning I was routed out and rushed off to an airfield near Daba, from which various bomber or transport planes were taking off at frequent intervals. Weighed before embarking, I just made sixty-eight kilograms—about ten stone ten pounds. An interesting example of drastic reducing—three pounds in six days' desert walking. At 7.30 a.m. on September 16, 1942, we roared off the airfield and swung round for Rome non-stop.

Coming under control of Mussolini's police in Rome necessitated immediate transfer to their local transit camp for p.o.w.s, situated in cavalry barracks so ancient that Caesar's horsemen might have stabled there. The phrase, "steeped in the ammoniacal tradition," is sometimes used to describe the mounted arm; but nowhere could one find a better practical example than those Roman barracks, which positively reeked of ammonia from centuries of stabling and inefficient mucking-out.

I lived in that atmosphere for five long days, confined to bed in a cold gloomy stone vault, with heavily barred windows and sentry at the door. Bed proved a necessity because my few scanty, very partworn desert clothes—shorts, shirt and stockings—went off to the local laundry. In typical Italian style they eventually caught up with me six months later—complete, clean, but just a bit late. As not even a New Zealand brigadier could travel in Italy stark naked except for broken-soled desert boots and an aged South African helmet, the Italians had to fit me up in their pants and a British battle-dress blouse. In this natty ensemble, I moved on north to Campo di Prigioneri 29, situated at Veano on the hills bordering the Po Valley.

Looked For Tunnels

Campo 29 occupied an imposing three-storey stone building, used originally as a seminary, or resthouse, for tired clericals; quite an appropriate setting really for senior officer prisoners. Our portion was T-shaped, the stem running roughly east to west. Our territory also included one big courtyard on the head of the T, and a big terrace filling the southern corner, which of course was shut in by formidable double barbed-wire fences. The big courtyard and the terrace were ours during daylight, but after evening roll-call the big doors slammed shut and we were locked up for the night. The Italians came inside at least four times every twenty-four hours. There were also two roll-calls and a bed-by-bed night check, and a police inspection of vulnerable points, such as barred windows or doors and potential tunnelling areas.

On the second morning at Veano, Hil Evans, a New Zealand gunner major, took me on a conducted tour, explaining all the escape

Continued on page 21

"I'll take them as they are," he said. He sounded nervous, impatient. The woman smiled. Obviously, her elegant young customer was in love

TWO DOZEN ROSES

by ALAN JENKINS

ILLUSTRATED BY KENNETH WYNNE

All his life he had wooed her. Today he would see her face for the first time

HE WAS AN ELEGANT YOUNG MAN. Mme Ekonomakis noticed him as soon as he entered her flower shop. Had she been a few years younger, she could have fancied such a youth, for all he was a Moslem. His black hair lay crisp and close about his head, his olive skin was smooth, his lips well formed and his eyes of extraordinary depth and brilliance.

He pointed to some yellow roses: "I'll take a dozen of these." He nodded towards some choice Fayoum roses of a rich crimson: "And a dozen of those."

He was not from Cairo, she thought; not from Egypt at all. Seeing that she knew him for a foreigner, he went on talking in French.

"Mix them, please, in one large bunch."

He seemed nervous. Mme Ekonomakis smiled. Such a beautiful young man had no need to be nervous. Would not any girl be proud of his attentions? For certainly he was going to visit a girl. Flowers are for courtship, and roses, in Cairo, are rare and costly.

"Let me pack them nicely in a box, sir. Our Egyptian roses do not keep their fragrance for long." She flicked some water over the half-closed blossoms, and bent to smell them. "This is a hot, dry country. My daughter, who lives in Alexandria, says that flowers do not smell in Cairo. She says it is because there is no humidity in the air, and——"

He made an impatient gesture. "Please don't trouble. I will carry them as they are."

"Very good, sir." Mme Ekonomakis smiled again: "You are from Syria, I think?"

He looked at her absently, but said nothing. He put two fifty-piastre bills on a small, glass-topped table, turned quickly, and left the shop without waiting for any change. A forgetful young man, she thought: forgetful, and in love.

The young man, whose name was Saadi Atta, strolled down Soliman Pasha Street, glancing idly at shop-windows. The morning sunshine pressed down upon him with overwhelming strength. He turned into a coffee-bar and ordered Turkish coffee.

"Bring me a newspaper, please."

The Sudanese bartender gave him an Arabic daily. The front page was dominated by large pictures of a slight, mild-faced, elderly man in dark glasses, seen among various groups of plump Egyptian Cabinet Ministers. "SYRIAN MINISTER SEEKS NEAR-EASTERN SOLIDARITY," the headline ran. "DR. ASSMAR BEY UNDERLINES NECESSITY OF RESISTING AGGRESSION. . . . ASSMAR COUNSELS CAUTION AND CO-OPERATION WITH BRITAIN AND AMERICA. . . ." There followed a programme of the state reception which had been arranged for him. It was going to be quite a big affair. Saadi decided to watch it from the Midan Ismailia. There was plenty of time: too much time for a young man with a beating heart and an appointment. Tenderly he sniffed the flowers he had bought, wondering how long they would live.

IT was the season of flowers in Cairo. In the little mosque at the top of Kasr el Nil Street, their colours mingled with the reds and pinks of the worshippers' tarbooshes, and the slippers of the Faithful in neat pairs beside them as they prostrated themselves.

All flowers made Dr. Assmar homesick. Home, to Dr. Assmar, was a cool house in the Salhieh quarter of Damascus. A house with a sheltered courtyard and a lazy fountain in the middle. A courtyard through which a tiny streamlet trickled, on its underground way to meet the bubbling Barada river. A streamlet where lilies floated.

Breathing hard with exertion, Dr. Assmar

It was the big moment of his life. Clutching the flowers, he started forward through the mob

rose to his feet and put on one of his shoes. Damascus—the thought made him sigh—was only four hours away by plane. He had not seen it for three weeks, and it would be at least ten more days before he was home again. He was nearly seventy now, and did not like to be far from home.

As he put on his other shoe, Dr. Assmar winced with pain. He bent down and extracted a wedge of paper from the toe. He was about to throw it impatiently away, but curiosity restrained him. He read what was written on the paper, then put it slowly into his pocket.

The blazing sunlight struck him full in the face as he came out of the mosque. He shaded his eyes against the heat, which the thick lenses of his spectacles made unbearable. He stood for a moment at the top of the steps that led down to the street, and blinked around for his secretary.

"Maarouf! Where are you?"

"Here, sir." Maarouf, a calm young man and a graduate of the American University at Beirut, appeared at his master's elbow. Tall, broad, pale, dark, he contrasted oddly with Dr. Assmar, who was swarthy, white-haired, small and thin. The two men were followed at a respectful distance by a third figure in a rather rumpled grey suit. Both knew he was there, feeling his presence like a flea-bite between their shoulder-blades, but neither gave him so much as a glance of recognition. They all climbed into Dr. Assmar's Pontiac convertible, the grey-suited man sitting in front with the driver, and drove away towards the Abdin Palace.

"The streets are being cleared already, sir," Maarouf said.

"The mounted police look very fine," Dr. Assmar remarked mildly. "They are making quite a fuss of us."

MAAROUF took a sheaf of mimeographed papers from his briefcase and consulted them. "The procession will form up outside the palace at eleven," he murmured. "The prime minister's car will be immediately behind the king's, and ours will come after the prime minister's."

"It seems an odd arrangement," Dr. Assmar shrugged. "I didn't expect to share the king's car, but I did imagine that we should precede the prime minister."

"The king doubtless wishes to welcome you publicly, sir," Maarouf went on smoothly. "To do that, he must get to the meeting place first. The procession moves off from the palace at eleven fifteen. It will make a tour of all the main streets, reaching the Midan Ismailia by way of Soliman Pasha at approximately eleven forty."

"Approximately?"

"Yes, Excellency." Maarouf looked uncomfortable for a second. "There may be a few demonstrations by students."

"As usual," Assmar snapped. "And yet, you know, this tour has been more successful than I had dared to hope. In Tehran we managed to make a few friends. In Amman they threw stones, but that was all. In Jerusalem——" He broke off with a sigh. "We who bring peace are not loved in this part of the world, Maarouf. Are we crazy to go on struggling?"

"Your Excellency's work will not be forgotten," Maarouf said tactfully. "You are trying to prevent the Arab world from drifting towards madness and disunity. That is a noble task." He cleared his throat a little pompously and went on reading:

"After the ceremony of welcome and your speech, sir, we shall visit parliament, and then drive back to the palace for luncheon. That will conclude the arrangements for today."

"Egyptians eat too much," Dr. Assmar twinkled. "We shall have to sleep for the rest of the day."

Maarouf smiled politely. "Tomorrow and

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Maria Floris watches while two of her decorators put the finishing touches to a birthday cake for Mrs. Churchill. In the egg are four pounds of chocolates

Madame makes cakes for the famous

by ***DON EVERITT***

Sugar hats for Churchill, an edible stage for Coward—each cake tells a story. And, says Madame, what a shame to eat it!

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, Mrs. Winston Churchill had ordered a birthday cake for her husband from the bakery and confectionery shop of Madame Floris in Soho. Always she requested a conventional design; always madame longed to do something a "little more expressive." Six years ago she plucked up her courage and begged to be allowed to produce a more fitting design. Reluctantly and rather nervously, Mrs. Churchill agreed, though madame would give no clue of what was in her mind.

On the birthday eve, Mrs. Churchill had a special preview of the cake. Her anxieties were immediately dispelled. It was a most impressive piece, done in the shape of a map of England, Wales and part of Scotland, with flags indicating all the places with which Churchill had been associated since childhood. Mrs. Churchill was so pleased with it that Madame Floris has been sending a surprise package to Hyde Park Gate, Chartwell or Downing Street on every November 30 since then.

She has maintained the original touch with replicas of the Churchill Arch in the House of Commons (complete with red carpet up the approach steps), a mountain scene, and a colourful merry-go-round. One year she sent a hat shaped cake decked with 160 feathers, on each of which were the details of a decoration which Churchill has received. "Also, on one feather was written 'Clementine,'" she says. "For his wife. They were very touched. Also, we sent a note saying sorry, we could not get on enough feathers for all his 300 decorations. Would you believe—Mr. Churchill wrote to ask if I could send him a complete list!"

Perhaps the most spectacular design—and certainly the one which gave Churchill the most amusement—was named "The Architect of Victory," and was made for his seventy-second birthday in 1946. Spiral-shaped, it told his life story through the hats he has worn. Thirty-seven icing models marched up the cake, among them his school cap, Boer War hat, flying helmet, painting and bricklaying hats, Yalta tarboosh and, finally, the victory topper, rakishly poised on a stick on top of the spiral.

"All these hats—to find them we have read books—oh, so many books," madame says. "But Mr. Churchill love it. Mrs. Churchill tells me he play with it for hours. He keep turning it round and round. I think he never know he had so many different hats. That is what a cake should do. It should be interesting. It is in the middle of the occasion. Not just to be cut and eaten up—oh, no, no, no. When I can, I always try to do something a little special."

By making cakes, bread, chocolates and pastries which are different—and more expensive—this slender, grey-haired, chain-smoking Hungarian woman has become one of the leading confectioners and bakers in the West End of London. Eighteen years ago, madame had seven employees and the fifth floor of a building in Bourchier Street, Soho. Today she has 150 employees and all five floors, plus a shop and two floors in adjacent Brewer Street.

Sells To Eton Boys

Her customers include peers (the Duke of Sutherland, for instance), politicians, film and theatre stars (the Olivers, the Royal Opera House Company), authors (Somerset Maugham), West End stores and hotels (Fortnum and Mason's and Claridges), and public-school boys (Eton). She sells her exclusive chocolates and petit-fours on the Continent and in America. And the catering section of her firm handles

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They do it with mirrors

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

A chance remark of the inspector's had given Alex Restarick the idea. With sudden, horrifying certainty, Miss Marple knew he had stumbled on the truth

CHRISTIAN GULBRANDSEN, AN EXECUTOR of the wealthy Gulbrandsen Trust, had been found murdered in his room at Stonygates, a country house which was also a college for juvenile delinquents.

Lewis Serrocold, who ran the college with money from the Gulbrandsen Trust, claimed he knew why. He informed Inspector Curry, the detective in charge of the case, that Gulbrandsen had told him his wife, Carrie Louise Serrocold, was being poisoned. Gulbrandsen had been about to set down the details of his discovery in a letter when the poisoner—whose identity he had kept secret—had shot him.

The shot had been heard by the assembled household in the great hall. They had been distracted, however, by a scene created by Edgar Lawson, a young psychopathic case, who suddenly accused Lewis Serrocold of being his father. Serrocold, familiar with Lawson's father complex, had drawn him into his study. While the ensuing scene—accompanied by two wild shots from the gun Lawson had somehow acquired—went on, Gulbrandsen was shot in his room.

Inspector Curry, learning that almost everyone in the house stood to gain financially by Carrie Louise's death, asked Miss Jane Marple, a guest—not one of the family—to keep an eye on her. He thought the poisoner was in the household, which included Miss Bellever, Carrie Louise's companion; Mildred Strete, her widowed daughter; Gina Hudd, her granddaughter; Gina's American husband, Wally; and Stephen and Alex Restarick, Carrie Louise's stepsons.

Miss Marple was successful in her job. She was present to prevent Carrie Louise sampling a box of poisoned chocolates that came for her—bearing Alex Restarick's card.

Restarick said he hadn't sent them. He had ideas of his own about how the murder was done—and who the poisoner was.

PART 5

Alex Makes An Offer

ALEX RESTARICK walked slowly up the drive, turning over in his mind the possibilities of his new idea. He was diverted from this, however, by the sight of Gina walking on the path by the lake. The house was on a slight eminence and the ground sloped gently down from the front steps of gravel to the lake, which was bordered by rhododendrons and other shrubs.

Alex ran down the gravel and caught up with Gina.

"If you could black out that absurd Victorian monstrosity," he said, screwing up his eyes and gesturing with disgust at the house, "this would make a very good Swan Lake, with you, Gina, as the Swan Maiden. You are more like the Snow Queen, though, when I come to think of it. Ruthless, determined to have your own way, quite without pity or kindliness or the rudiments of compassion. You are very, *very* feminine, Gina, dear."

"How malicious you are, Alex, dear!"

"Because I refuse to be taken in by you? You're very pleased with yourself, aren't you, Gina? You've got us all where you want us. Myself, Stephen, and that large, simple husband of yours."

"You're talking nonsense."

"Oh, no, I'm not. Stephen's in love with you, I'm in love with you, and Wally's desperately miserable. What more could a woman want?"

Gina looked at him and laughed.

Alex nodded his head vigorously. "You have the rudiments of honesty, I'm glad to see. That's the Latin in you. You don't go to the trouble of pretending that you're not attractive to men—and that you're terribly sorry about it if they are attracted to you. You like having men in love with you, don't you, cruel Gina? Even miserable little Edgar Lawson!"

GINA looked at him steadily. She said in a quiet, serious tone: "It doesn't last very long, you know. Women have a much worse time of it in the world than men do. They're more vulnerable. They have children, and they mind—terribly—about their children. As soon as they lose their looks, the men they love don't love them any more. They're betrayed and deserted and pushed aside. I don't blame men. I'd be the same myself. I don't like people who are old or ugly or ill, or who whine about their troubles, or who are ridiculous like Edgar, strutting about and pretending he's important and worth while. You say I'm cruel? It's a cruel world! Sooner or later it will be cruel to *me*! But now I'm young and I'm nice-looking and people find me attractive." Her teeth flashed out in her peculiarly warm, sunny smile. "Yes, I enjoy it, Alex. Why shouldn't I?"

"Why, indeed?" said Alex. "What I want to know is what you are going to do about it. Are you going to marry Stephen or are you going to marry me?"

"I'm married to Wally."

"Temporarily. Every woman should make one mistake matrimonially—but there's no need to dwell on it. Having tried out the show in the provinces, the time has come to bring it to the West End."

"And you're the West End?"

"Indubitably."

"Do you really want to marry me? I can't imagine you married."

"I insist on marriage. *Affaires*, I always think, are so very old-fashioned. Difficulties with passports and hotels and all that. I shall *never* have a mistress unless I can't get her any other way!"

Gina's laugh rang out fresh and clear. "You do amuse me, Alex."

"It's my principal asset. Stephen is much better-looking than I am. He's extremely handsome and very intense, which, of course, women adore. But intensity is fatiguing in the home. With me, Gina, you will find life entertaining."

"Aren't you going to say you love me madly?"

"However true that may be, I shall certainly not say it. It would be one up to you and one down to me if I did. No, all I am prepared to do is to make you a businesslike offer of marriage."

"I shall have to think about it," said Gina, smiling.

"Naturally. Besides, you've got to put Wally out of his misery first. I've a lot of sympathy with Wally. It must be absolute hell for him to be married to you and trailed along at your chariot wheels into this heavy family atmosphere of philanthropy."

"What a beast you are, Alex!"

"A perceptive beast."

"Sometimes," said Gina, "I don't think Wally cares for me one little bit. He just doesn't notice me any more."

"You've stirred him up with a stick and he doesn't respond? Most annoying."

Like a flash Gina swung her palm and delivered a ringing slap on Alex's smooth cheek.

"*Touché!*" cried Alex.

With a quick deft movement, he gathered her into his arms and, before she could resist, his lips fastened on hers in a long, ardent kiss. She struggled a moment and then relaxed.

"Gina!"

THEY sprang apart. Mildred Strete, her face red, her lips quivering, glared at them balefully. For a moment the eagerness of her words choked their utterance.

"Disgusting . . . you abandoned, beastly girl . . . you're just like your mother . . . a bad lot . . . and you're not only an adulteress—you're a murderess, too. Oh, yes, you are. I know what I know!"

"And what do you know? Don't be ridiculous, Aunt Mildred."

"I'm no aunt of yours, thank goodness. No blood relation to you. Why, you don't even know who your mother was or where she came from! But you know well enough what my father was like and my mother. What sort of a child do you think they would adopt? A criminal's child or a prostitute's, probably! That's the sort of people they were. They ought to have remembered that bad blood will tell. Though I daresay that it's the Italian in you that makes you turn to *poison*."

"How dare you say that?"

"I shall say what I like. You can't deny now, can you, that somebody tried to poison mother? And who's the most likely person to do that? Who comes into an enormous fortune if mother dies? You do, Gina, and you may be sure the police have not overlooked that fact."

Still trembling, Mildred moved rapidly away.

"Pathological," said Alex. "Definitely pathological. Really *most* interesting. It makes one

Alex and Gina sprang apart. Mildred Strete stood glaring at them. "Disgusting!" she said

wonder about the late Canon Strete. . . . Religious scruples, perhaps? Or would you say impotent?"

"Don't be disgusting, Alex. Oh, I hate her, I hate her." Gina clenched her hands and shook with fury.

"Lucky you hadn't got a knife in your stocking," said Alex. "If you had, dear Mrs. Strete might have known something about murder from the point of view of the victim."

"How dare she say I tried to poison Grandam?"

"Well, darling, from the point of view of motive you're well in the picture, aren't you?"

"Alex!" Gina stared at him, dismayed. "Do the police think so?"

"It's extremely difficult to know what the police think. . . . They keep their own counsel remarkably well. They're by no means fools, you know. That reminds me. . . ."

"Where are you going?"

"To work out an idea of mine."

STARING at her husband with bewilderment and disbelief, Carrie Louise said: "You say somebody has been trying to *poison* me? Why, I can't—I'm really unable to believe it."

Lewis said gently: "I wish I could have spared you this, dearest."

Miss Marple, sitting close by, shook her head sympathetically.

"Is it really true, Jane?"

"I'm afraid so, my dear."

"Then everything. . . ." Carrie Louise broke off. "I've always thought I knew what was real and what wasn't. *This* doesn't seem real—but it is. . . . So I may be wrong everywhere. . . . But who could want to do such a thing to me? Nobody in this house could want to—*kill* me?" Her voice still held incredulity.

"That's what I would have thought," said Lewis. "I was wrong."

"And Christian knew about it? That explains it."

"Explains what?" asked Lewis.

"His manner," said Carrie Louise. "It was very odd, you know. Not at all his usual self. He seemed—upset about me, and as though he was wanting to say something to me, and then not saying it. And he asked me if my heart was strong, and if I'd been well lately. Trying to hint to me, perhaps. But why not say something straight out?"

"He didn't want to—cause you pain, Caroline."

"Pain? But why—oh, I see. . . ." Her eyes widened. "So *that's* what you believe! But you're wrong, Lewis. Quite wrong. I can assure you of that."

Her husband avoided her eyes.

"I'm sorry," said Mrs. Serrocold, after a moment or two. "But I can't believe anything of what has happened lately is true. Edgar shooting at you. Gina and Stephen. That ridiculous box of chocolates. It just isn't *true*."

Nobody spoke. Caroline Louise Serrocold sighed. "I suppose," she said, "that I must have lived outside reality for a long time. Please, both of you, I think I would like to be alone. I've got to try and understand. . . ."

MISS MARPLE went down the stairs and into the great hall to find Alex Restarick standing near the large arched entrance door with his hand flung out in a somewhat flamboyant gesture.

"Come in, come in," said Alex happily and as though he were the owner of the great hall. "I'm just thinking about last night."

Lewis Serrocold, who had followed Miss Marple down, crossed the great hall to his study and went in and shut the door.

"Are you trying to reconstruct the crime?" asked Miss Marple with subdued eagerness.

"Not exactly. I was looking at the whole thing from an entirely different point of view. I was thinking of this place in the terms of the theatre. Not reality, but artificiality! Just come over here. Think of it in the terms of a stage set. Lighting, entrances, exits. *Dramatis personae*. Noises off. All very interesting. Not all my own idea. The inspector gave it to me. It was just a chance remark . . . *stage effects are an illusion only to the beholder*. I think he's rather a cruel man. He did his best to frighten me this morning."

"And did he frighten you?"

"I'm not sure."

Alex described the inspector's experiment and the timing of the performance of the puffing Constable Dodgett.

"Time," he said, "is so very misleading. One thinks things take such a long time, but really, of course, they don't."

"No," said Miss Marple.

Representing the audience, she moved to a different position. The stage set now consisted of a vast, tapestry-covered wall going up to dimness, with a grand piano up L and a window and window seat up R. Very near the window seat was the door into the library. The piano-stool was only about eight feet from the door into the square lobby which led to the corridor. Two very convenient exits! The audience, of course, had an excellent view of both of them. . . .

But last night, there had been no audience. Nobody, that is to say, had been facing the stage-set that Miss Marple was now facing. The audience, last night, had been sitting

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Randle makes an entrance, and waits for the applause to die down. On the right is Renée Houston, guest artist in his show, *Randle's Scandals*

Nina Rathbone runs over the stage directions with Randle. "He's the most unpredictable man I've ever met," she says

Frank Randle, Blackpool's slapstick star

by KEITH ELLIS

Police hold back his fans in the provinces. He earns £1,000 a week in films which break box office records. Yet one of the mysteries of show business is why the West End was not amused

WHEN NINA RATHBONE, until recently Frank Randle's stage director, noticed that the spotlight failed to come on when Randle went on stage for a sketch, she immediately started running up to the operator's box. For Randle is touchy about spotlights. He insists that they must follow his every movement precisely. On the first night of a run, he is fairly tolerant of mistakes. On the second he is irritable. If the spot fails to pinpoint him on the Wednesday, he sends up a sharp note. If the fault is not remedied by Thursday, he parades the culprit in his dressing-room for a personal slanging.

And now the spotlight had not even appeared. Miss Rathbone panted up the steps. The operator explained that the generator had broken down and nothing could be done. Down the steps she ran to watch the rest of the sketch from backstage. Half-way through, she could no longer stand the suspense and ran up again. "Isn't there *anything* you can do?" she asked. The operator was definite. "Nothing at all," he said. Dejectedly she crept down the steps, wondering how she was going to soothe the inevitably wrathful Randle. When the sketch had finished, she tapped fearfully at his dressing-room door. "I'm terribly sorry," she began, "but. . . ." Randle was sitting on a chair, thinking of something completely different. "Oh, that's all right," he murmured. "Don't let that worry you."

Miss Rathbone was flabbergasted. She would have been even more so had she not almost come to expect the unexpected from Randle. "He's the most unpredictable man I've met," she says. Anyone who has ever tried to predict anything about Randle would agree.

When he recently announced that he was going to appear in the West End of London, for instance, critics noted that his show made between £500 and £1,000 a week profit in the provinces. They knew that his salary when making the films which hold house records in some northern cinemas was £1,000 a week. They knew, too, that he was in high demand for pantomime and seaside summer seasons. Tentatively they predicted that he would be a success in the West End.

But, at the end of a week, takings were £2,400 below the level at which he had agreed to leave the show. At the end of a fortnight, he was out.

The critics thought again. As a victim of "one of the great mysteries of show business," Randle was pigeon-holed. "Why," asked one critic, "do comedians with fabulous reputations in the north seldom, if ever, play true to form in London?" But Randle refused to be dismissed so tidily. The very next week he took his own show to the Metropolitan, Edgware Road, only a short bus ride from the West End, and got the kind of welcome he expects in Blackpool. Policemen had to keep the crowds from the stage door.

Since then he has played a number of London suburban music halls, where business was fair to good. At Manchester he has broken an all-time record for Saturday-night takings. "You haven't to take it too seriously," he says. "Even in Lancashire, on my own midden, I've done badly. Nine months later I've returned to the same theatre with the same act, word for word, gesture for gesture, and I've been a riot."

At fifty-one, Randle is of medium height, slim and lithe. He has a mobile face, rather heavily lined, and a full head of wavy, silver hair. He dresses neatly, usually in blazer and slacks, which give him the look of a north-country business man

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

on a yachting holiday. Actually he does own a yacht, as well as a fine house in Blackpool and two cars.

His dapper appearance, however, completely belies his line in humour. "I'm after belly-laughs," he says. "I'm vulgar, but not filthy." Some London critics may not like his earthiness, but his fans agree with the north-country showman who said: "It's just honest-to-goodness vulgarity. We've all burped after a bottle of beer." Partly owing to the fact that he has played all three piers at Blackpool, Randle is known throughout the north as "the uncrowned king of Blackpool."

For the rest, he specializes in slapstick and buffoonery. He admits to being not particularly witty, but a Lancashire accent, which he tones down outside the north, gives a comic edge to his words. He avoids what he calls "nasty innuendos." As the *Manchester Guardian* put it: "Mr. Randle is the master of the single *entendre*."

Last-minute Alterations

Randle is temperamental, easily upset and changeable. He is apt to slam down the telephone in the middle of a conversation. Several times he has sacked his entire company, but has re-engaged them on the same day. Normally he speaks in a Lancashire mutter, breaking off half-way through a sentence to complete his meaning with a series of grimaces and gestures. When angry, his brow wrinkles, his eyes flash and his words snap out like pistol shots.

Scarcely a week passes without his changing the sequence of acts in his show, often at the last minute. Once, during a small act in front of the curtain, an elaborate scene was set behind. The actors took their places and Randle came to give his approval. "That's no good," he said. "We'll have so-and-so instead." The whole scene had to be dismantled. The actors hurried to change their dress and make-up during the few seconds before the scene was due. "But the public did not notice anything," says Miss Rathbone.

In his own company, Randle always insists on the status of principal comic, and once refused a part in a London pantomime because the promoter insisted that the principal boy, who had a name well-known in the south, should be top of the bill. When the publicity man for one of his films managed to get a "pin-up" photograph of the girl star into a couple of newspapers, Randle approached him with a copy. "What's the meaning of this?" he demanded. "Don't you know *I'm* the star of this picture?"

But these spasms and quirks are just as likely to be devoted to wholly unselfish ends. When a boy wrote to say that he had enjoyed Randle's films, but could not see him at the theatre because his father was ill and his mother could not afford the money, he sent two tickets by return. In Sheffield, eighteen months ago, he arranged for a crippled girl to be brought to the theatre in a taxi.

When he was making a film at Hammersmith, an old friend called to see him. Formerly a prosperous comedian, he was now in a home for old actors. Randle remembered how this same man had shared a chicken with him and his wife when they were half-starving, many years before. He got him a part in the picture as a nightwatchman and later enrolled him in his company.

Worked In The Market

Frank Randle was born in Wigan in 1900. From the age of eight he worked in shops at nights, and at weekends sold vegetables in Chorley market with Mrs. Dawber, his next-door neighbour. At thirteen he left school and started work in a chemist's shop at five shillings a week.

When he was fourteen his father died and his mother took him to Blackpool, where she got work as a barmaid. Young Randle embarked on a series of jobs which were to include waiter, bottlewasher, cellarman, boots-cum-porter, printer's devil, butcher's boy and tram conductor.

By now, however, he had decided that the stage was going to be his career, and he took jobs as a supernumerary at the Palace Theatre, Blackpool. Soon, with two brothers he met, he formed a gymnastic act. "We played every valley in South Wales, and once topped the bill at the Workmen's Hall, Tredegar, for £3 a week. But we were living from hand to mouth and spent half our time waiting for telegrams."

When the act broke up, Randle took a job in a stage circus, "a great training for a comic." At twenty-one he had a series of comic leads in "tinpot" revues until he joined Jack Taylor as one of his twelve comics. Within a year he was principal comic. "Then," he says, "I became swollen headed and quarrelled with the management. Soon I was back again where I started."

He had, however, fallen in love with a vocalist in Jack Taylor's show, and spent his savings on the wedding. Eventually he rejoined Jack Taylor in a touring show. After the provinces they played the London Alhambra. "That was 1935," says Randle, "and we got good notices."

Since then it has been a story of steady success. When war broke out there was a demand in the Press for escapist shows. "People want to forget the war," ran the argument. Randle judged the public mood better. When he formed his own show, *North West Follies*, in 1940, he put in a high proportion of service material. The show is still running under the title of *Randle's Scandals*, "and I don't remember a single losing week."

Money-spinners In North

Meanwhile, he had started making films, at first with Harry Korris and Robby Vincent, "but after the first film," says director John Blakeley, "we knew we'd got a winner." In his other eight films, mainly slapstick, Randle was the star. Though none of them have had national reviews, London premières or circuit bookings, all have been money spinners between Oxford and Newcastle-on-Tyne. One manager complained that the crowd had been so impatient to get in that they had torn one of his doors off its hinges.

For the future, Randle does not intend to "push things." Though he contemplates no more films at the moment, some people think that if he accepted a well-written character part in a first feature he would achieve the national acclaim which has so far eluded him. After two or three well-noticed television appearances, he is ready for more when the chance comes. Meanwhile, his show continues to tour the suburbs and provinces, and he intends some time to return to the West End, "though it will be doubly difficult." Since he believes that the main reason for his recent failure was an unsuitable bill, he will insist next time on appearing in his own show.

No Illusions About Fame

In private life he is modest and never bores his friends with smoking-room jokes or patter. He has no illusions about wealth or fame, and years ago threw away his Press-cuttings book. "I don't want the earth," he says, "and I don't want to work for nothing." He despises people who evade income tax. "The happiest man," he believes, "is the one who has to work all day for a small wage. *He* really enjoys his pleasures." Introspective, he believes that making people laugh is his way of justifying his existence. He is happily married and has few interests outside the theatre, though he drinks in moderation—stout in the dressing-room and, afterwards, whisky for relaxation.

"During the last few years," he says, "I've played theatres that can only be called dumps. As long as I play dumps as well as the better houses, whatever happens, no one can say I've slipped."

He recalls the story of the ageing comedian who, after trying in vain to make his audience laugh, said, with tears in his eyes: "Ladies and gentlemen, I can't make you laugh, so I'll dance." Says Randle: "That is the most pathetic thing I've heard. I hope I die in harness like Tommy Handley or Sid Field." THE END

With his two guests stars, Donald Stewart and Renée Houston, Randle takes a glass of stout in the bar

On the stage, Randle insists on a personal spotlight. Here he is (in singlet) in an Army sketch

TEN POUNDS AND A FEATHER BED

by **PAULINE CLARKE**

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER, R.A.

The notice read: "The party that marries my daughter shall receive ten pounds and a feather bed." Susy felt sick with shame. How could she marry anyone after that?

"COME YOU ON NOW, LADIES and gentlemen. Having de-posed of that there brace of sole to Mis' Potter we'll get on to this plaice. A rare beauty. Fat! Weigh it up, Sammy. Worth at least sixpence. *Two-pence!* I like that. I'd rather chuck the plaice back in the sea. Fourpence? Going for four-pence and cheap at that."

Jim Hardy was perched on a wooden case above the crowd, dangling a plaice by the tail. With the high tide early that morning had come in the Hardy trawler, and now they were auctioning the fish upon trestle-tables set out at the foot of the little green hump known as Fisherman's Hill.

Mr. Hardy the elder sat on a pile of nets, smoking his pipe, listening to his son with patient amusement. Sammy, Jim's brother, weighed and chose, handed the fish up to Jim.

"Here's a beauty, now. Who'll bid for this here?"

Susy Goodchild, standing on the fringe of the crowd, took a liking to the fish in question. "I'll give you threepence, Jim," she said. Her voice was quiet and timid.

"Oh, Susy, my dear, only threepence for a fish like this? You'll have me in the workhouse before me time."

Everyone laughed, but no one else bid. Susy was generally liked: if she wanted the fish she should have it. Besides, people were sorry for her with no mother and an eccentric father; an only daughter, lonely.

"All right, Jim. Fourpence," she said.

"That's it, my beauty, going for four-pence to Miss Goodchild. And I tell you what, my dear, if you like to step up here, I'll auction you," went on Jimmy with a general wink at the crowd.

The effect of this remark was unusual. A sudden silence fell. Strange glances turned on Susy, of which she was unconscious. Jimmy opened his mouth to add something else. But Sam, seizing a dab by its tail, smacked him smartly across the face.

"That's enough now," he said angrily.

SUSY, however, had taken Jim's remark as a compliment. No girl in Snetterley minded Jim. Susy had adored him secretly ever since he had knocked over a boy who was bullying her in the school yard. Recently she had made a point of watching out for him, counting the days while the trawler was gone, making chances to pass him in the street.

She rounded the quay and turned into West Street, where the grey flint cottages huddled closely in cobbled yards, built at right angles to the street, from east to west, to avoid the biting northerly winds.

In the bow window of her father's shop she saw the usual display of papers, informing the shopper of his latest prices, his newest stock. One, she knew, was causing much speculation. It was a debt notice, and George Goodchild had an original way of collecting his debts. In beautiful but crabbed copper-plate writing was the message:

A certain party owes me a sum of money. If the debt is not paid by June 30, the amount of the debt will be inserted here

.....

If the debt is not paid by July 31, the name of the party will be inserted here

.....

Susy knew it by heart, the old formula. But strangely enough the name never appeared. The debt was always paid before this final disgrace.

Susy was about to open the door, when a new notice caught her eye. On a clean piece of stiff card, hung by red ribbon in a prominent place, her father had written:

The party that marries Susan Jane Goodchild, my daughter, shall receive, when the marriage is arranged, the sum of ten pounds, and a feather bed.

Signed: George Goodchild,
this sixth day of May, 1897.

A hard gasp rose to Susy's throat as she stood there. She turned first hot, and then very pale, and her hand flew up to her throat. She read it again, hardly believing it. Her eyes swam with sudden tears of humiliation, so that she could no longer see the hateful, spidery writing, the flamboyant red ribbon.

She darted down the yard for the side door of the house, and ran up the stairs to her room for cover. All she wanted was to get out of sight, to hide herself, never to see anyone who knew her again. She flung herself on the heavy white quilt, and let her tears come.

How could her father do such a thing? How could she ever marry anyone after that? It was some minutes before she remembered, with a pang of painful understanding, Jim's remark at the auction. Hot shame flooded all over her again, her hand twisted on the brass bed-post. They had all seen it. They knew what his joke meant. Her father must have put it up that morning after she had left in her aunt's wagon to go to Woodham.

She lay and shivered, her skin feeling too tight, as the tears dried upon her cheeks. With a cool sense of comfort, like a rim of sea water coming gently over sand, she remembered Sammy's anger.

Susy looked up from the tell-tale entry in the ledger. She felt cold and dead inside

GEORGE GOODCHILD was in the kitchen, rubbing his hands. He was a small, rotund man, and round faced. Grey whiskers grew all round his cheeks and ended in a fluff over his chin, exactly like the seed pods of that hedge creeper called Old Man's Beard. His eyes were bright and grey. Susy took after him, being herself somwhat small and round, with cheeks usually rosy. But now her eyes were red in a pale face.

"Ah, Susy."

"Father. How could you put up that about me getting married?"

Her father laughed, but uneasily, seeing her face. "I mean to do well by you, Susy. No one can say my daughter goes empty handed——"

"But, Father. To put it up there where every soul can read it. I don't know how to go out again, I feel so ashamed."

"I'm sorry you should take it this way," he

She reached the shore as the sailors were brought in. One of them was being carried, unconscious. As he passed her, she saw that it was Sammy

said uncomfortably. "It was done to help you, girl. Here was your aunt here the other day, a-sitting there telling me you ought to be married. So I thought what I could do. . . . And it's only in the style of one of my little jokes, Susy. Everyone understands my jokes."

"They'll surely be afraid to come now," said Susy in a low voice, "even if they'd ever thought of courting me before."

MAY opened out into June and the people of Snetterley cautiously admitted the summer was come. All over the marsh crisp, sweet sea-lavender blew in drifts, so that the place was purple with it.

Since the hateful day of the auction, Sammy had been attentive to Susy. At first she was afraid that he pitied her, was trying to cover up Jim's teasing in the only way he knew. He would wait, seeing her coming. He would stop and join her for a minute or two as she watched the men unloading the coal from the lighters, and filling up with skeps full of grain from the barns along the quay. The sailing ships rode out in the deepest part of the channel, waiting for their new load, except when the tide was big enough for them to come right up the Cut, as some of the smaller ones could.

She and Sammy never mentioned the incident at the auction: but it was as if both knew the small beginning of a thing that was growing. It made Susy happy, quietly. She had always taken Sam for granted, partly because Jimmy's tongue and sauce over-shadowed his quieter brother. Now she had started to notice his hands and the shape of his face, sideways: and to listen when people spoke of him.

One day he joined her as she gathered samphire in the late afternoon sun, wandering over the slimy mud reaches after the juiciest shoots. Susy cut with a pair of scissors, but Sam rent it up by its roots, shaking the mud off impatiently.

"You'll get me all over mud," she said.

"Come on, now, Susy, you'll never eat all that before it stinks," he said.

He came and stood over where she was picking; she watched his boots coming. Then he stamped gently on her fingers, pink and wet with sea-water. Susy laughed, not daring to stand up.

When she did stand up, he kissed her.

"Sammy! Out here in the open, with everyone looking!" she gasped.

All round them for miles the marshes stretched. A few dark figures bent over their cockling in the distance. The ferry was deserted. The lull of low-tide lay over everything. The mud sang, the plovers called. Sammy looked quizzically up into the bright air, where the wing of a gull caught the sun.

"I reckon you mean that chap," he said, and kissed her again.

ON June 30, George Goodchild inserted the amount of the debt owed to him on the notice in his window. Ten pounds. It was an unusually large debt, and Susy could not help wondering who could have bought enough soap and candles and butter and sugar and twine and currants and treacle and lard and china and spices to add up to so much. A whole set of the Queen's jubilee china, mugs, plates, cups and all would not have come to that. Her father rather specialized in china. But she never asked him about his business. He would sit sometimes at night, spectacles on his nose, entering things in his neat writing in a large leather-bound book. When he had finished, he would slump the book closed and put it on a low shelf behind the counter in the close-smelling little shop.

Other people, too, wondered about the big debt, and as the month wore on there was betting in The Rose and Crown on the quay. The gathering here was always large and good, humoured, for the beer was home-brewed (you could smell it all round the quay) from hops brought in and local barley, and cost only three-halfpence a pint, instead of twopence as at the other tied houses. Gus Hillyer brewed it and owned the inn and the brewery.

Gussy let out a whistling breath, like a horse.

"I reckon some soul have borrowed the money to help buy theirselves a cottage," he said.

"Who's lately been a-buying a cottage then?" asked someone, of everyone.

"Why, Willy James," said Jim Hardy, emptying his pot, as if the question were now settled.

"Reckon, it must be him," said another. "What do you say, Sammy?"

"I reckon," said Sam stolidly, "that if whoever's borrowed it don't pay it back this month

we shall all know soon enough who 'tis, whereby I see no call to puzzle my brains over it now." With which he slapped down his pennies before Gus and strode out, his leather boots creaking.

Towards the end of July was the regatta. The whole village gathered on the fresh marsh between Snetterley and Creak, the small seaport which had once shared Snetterley's trade. In Creak's estuary, on the full tide, the races were held. It was before the days of smart racing yachts. There was rowing and punting and poling of the ships' boats, and some small sailing craft races. There was also swimming and diving and a horizontal greased pole with a large joint of meat in a box on the end. Sammy won the joint; he clutched the box to his bosom as he fell into the sea, "for all the world as if it were little Susy," said Gus, letting out his whistling breath. The people walked back along the sea wall with stars freckled over the wide sky and the harbour beacons alight all down the Cut.

Sammy and Susy walked the other way, along the sea wall to Creak, when the people had gone. Carrying wet clothes and his box with the joint, Sammy felt himself unnecessarily hampered.

"Here, these blessed things," he said suddenly, "and this damned box of meat. They're in my way." And he threw them all impatiently behind a bush.

"Would you marry me, Susy?" he said, his hands on her shoulders. Susy put her arms round his neck to kiss him. His cheek was cool and smooth and salty from the sea-water, and his lips tasted of sea.

"I'll come in and see your father tomorrow," he whispered, when they said good night to each other outside the little shop in West Street.

Susy nodded. Neither of them had said a word about the notice in the window.

THE wedding was to be in late August. Aunt Lottie had arranged everything, taking Susy to Woodham to have her clothes made, giving her little lectures on her duty as a wife. On the wedding day, she and Freddy, Susy's cousin, were to come very early in the trap from Marston, two miles up the coast. Aunt Lottie was a widow and Freddy managed the farm where they lived. Susy went for a walk along the sea wall the night before her wedding, thinking her own thoughts. She met Milly Waite, a girl she had never liked.

"Well, my dear, and how do you feel?" Milly began, turning to walk along with her. "That was a funny thing, Susy, how that debt was ten pounds, the same as what your dad promised with you. And then, no sooner did your dowry notice go down, than in a day or two down went the other, too. That was right queer that was and no mistake."

Susy looked at her with a sudden small fear in her heart. What she said was perfectly true. Susy had not connected the two events. She dismissed the thought now with dignity.

But when she lay in bed, excited and unable to sleep for hours, she started to worry about Milly's remark. It was no good telling herself that it was nonsense, this suspicion that had entered into her head. She made up her mind there was but one thing to do, and crept down, with a candle, into the shop.

She found the account book and opened it at the month of July.

"July 26," she read. "Paid to Sam Hardy, who is engaged to marry my daughter, ten pounds."

On the other side of the book, farther down, after the takings for the month in the shop, there was another entry.

"July 31. Paid to me by S. Hardy, in respect of a certain debt—ten pounds."

Susy sat there staring at the book. She sat there a long time, her head in her hands, the candle throwing grotesque shadows of her shoulders on the wall where the groceries huddled. She did not cry. She seemed dead and cold inside. So this was all it was; this was behind the warmth of her happiness, this cruel and calculating fact. And it had all dated, too, from the auction, Jim's remarks, the two notices side by side. Sammy needed the money.

Everything that might have comforted Susy forsook her. Sam's character as she knew it; the times they had had together; the quiet coming of her love.

I couldn't marry him now, with this between us. Why did father not tell me?

SHE was cold in her nightgown. She went upstairs quietly, already knowing what she would do. She dressed and put a few things into a case. She left her father a note and let herself out of the side door.

It was a dark night, for the moon was not up yet. Even while she suffered, she thought: I shall get over this. I shall feel different. But I cannot get over it where it all happened.

The night wind blew gently from the sea over the coast road; a sudden cry from a bird startled her.

In the yard of the farm at Marston, she paused, looking up at the dark house. It was a shame to wake them, for in two more hours they would be astir. She climbed up into the hay-loft and lay, bewildered and sleepless, listening to tiny rustlings at hand, and the thud of the sea, fields away.

Aunt Lottie, encasing herself in whalebone before putting on her mauve taffeta for the wedding, was struck dumb, opening her bedroom door to Susy. Very soon, gathering the drift of Susy's words, she philosophically (and not without some relief) removed the new corsets and held her niece, rocking her to and fro, as she cried. It became clear to Aunt Lottie that persuasion or argument or anger would be no use. Something had upset the applecart, though Susy would only say that she couldn't marry Sam and that it was no good.

Meanwhile, George would be frantic and the poor bridegroom must be told. Aunt Lottie sent Freddy to Snetterley at once on the cob.

Susy had half expected Sam to come. But when the days passed and no message came, she realized that it was no more than she deserved. She had jilted him on the very day of the wedding and made him look foolish before the whole of Snetterley, and, not least, foolish to his own family. He might well be angry and sore. Moreover, if she was right and he did not love her, he would take his freedom and be thankful, she supposed. But if he did? Surely he would have come or written her a letter.

Her father and Aunt Lottie decided that Susy should stay where she was at present until it had all died down. Just before he left, looking at Susy's anxious face, her father came out with what she wanted to hear.

"They say Sam's gone up to Huntley, where his uncle's smack is. I haven't seen him about, so I daresay it's true. The very day after, he went, so they say. I reckon he'll be sore, Susy. I heard he was flaming mad an' all."

"Well, what must be, must be, I suppose," said Aunt Lottie quickly.

A BLUE-AND-GOLDEN autumn gave place to a wild, wet November. Susy's unhappiness, though it would still sweep over her sometimes, had settled into a dull ache. She liked the work at the farm, and was much less lonely than she would have been at home.

But she wondered all the time about Sam, especially when it was wild at sea, as it was tonight.

She drew back her curtains and got into bed. It was an angry night. The wind had risen with the tide, rain lashed her window, driven hard and pitilessly by the north-westerly wind from the sea, as if it hurt itself on the pane and wept with rage. She could hear the sea surging dully behind the rampant shriek of the wind.

She prayed for everyone who might be at sea, particularly Sam.

The shouting awoke her from her first sleep, and made her sit up fearfully. The storm still rocked the house, but above it she could hear Freddy, bellowing from his window to somebody who bellowed back from the yard. She opened her window a crack to listen.

"I don't care," Freddy yelled, "if it is our turn. I lost my grey last time, with her getting pneumonia, and I never had no compensation, or not enough, and I'm not sending another good horse after her."

"I was to tell you to hurry, Fairbairn, with the horse, because they can't launch the lifeboat near the boathouse—there's not enough water yet—and they want to take her along over

Continued on page 29

CAMPBELL'S KINGDOM

by HAMMOND INNES

NEXT WEEK, John Bull will begin publication of a brilliant new book by a best-selling author—Hammond Innes's CAMPBELL'S KINGDOM. It is one of the most fascinating novels to be published this year.

The story is of a young Englishman, who, given only a few months to live, inherits a vast tract of land in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. The land suddenly becomes important to a powerful industrial group, who want him to sell. But money has no significance for him—and neither has danger, nor love, nor any of the forces that normally influence a man.

His dramatic adventures make a novel already described by one critic who has previewed it as "a magnificently readable adventure story with a breathtaking sweep."

Campbell's Kingdom will be illustrated in full colour by K. J. Petts, the famous artist whose illustrations and cover paintings have won him wide acclaim.

Campbell's Kingdom is No. 2 in JOHN BULL's great fiction programme for the rest of the year. Others to follow include new novels by NEVIL SHUTE, VICTOR CANNING, WINSTON GRAHAM and JAMES RAMSEY ULLMAN.

All these books are certain to be best-sellers—and all will be serialized in JOHN BULL before book publication.

There will be a tremendous demand for copies of John Bull. To make sure of yours, place a regular order with your newsagent or bookstall now.

Elizabeth Taylor plans a programme in an ice-cream factory

Workshop music control panel. Mrs. Taylor (centre) pioneered the idea

Mrs. Taylor's music livens up the factory

by MARJORIE EARL

Boredom vanishes when her carefully chosen tunes ring round the workshop. She tries to avoid vocalists. They only cause trouble

BACK IN 1940, PEDESTRIANS passing a house in London's Sloane Street were occasionally diverted from their anxieties by an extraordinary sight. An attractive young woman was throwing wooden boxes out of an upstairs window into the area four storeys below. Those who paused to inspect the result were bewildered by a warning on the box top which read: *Fragile. Do Not Drop*. They would have been still more puzzled had they been able to see the contents —gramophone records unimpaired by this rough treatment.

The young woman at the upstairs window was Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor, a pioneer who became an important figure in Britain's wartime industrial drive. The basis of her importance was the gramophone records she was so unceremoniously throwing into the area. In 1940, she founded an organization called Sound Recordings for Industry. Launched with the powerful backing of the Industrial Welfare Council, its purpose was to relieve boredom and tension among inexperienced women workers directed to war industry. Today, programmes planned by Mrs. Taylor serve 1,500,000 workers in more than 200 factories.

The "Perfect" Packing

She no longer throws her records out of the window. This eccentric performance was to test the efficiency of a packing system which she devised herself. Square boxes, just big enough to hold eight gramophone records, were lined with sponge rubber, felt, spring cushions and other materials, and she tested the efficiency of each by throwing boxes filled with records out of the window. Finally, she discovered a kind of quilted hemp. Protected by this material, the records survived the four-storey drop.

The idea of commercially recorded musical programmes for industry germinated in a gramophone shop in Sloane Street, a business which Mrs. Taylor had started some years earlier because it was the only way she could get all the foreign records she wanted for her private collection. The idea had been suggested by one of her customers, who was an official of Gillette Industries, Limited. Like other factories, Gillette's was anxious to maintain the morale of the girls at its work benches. From time to time the official confided his worries to Mrs. Taylor and suggested that music might help.

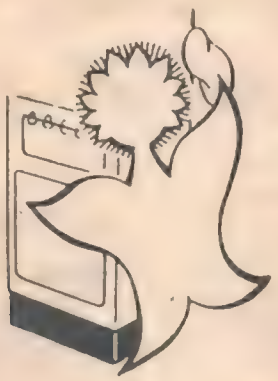
About the same time she met one of the directors of Lyons. He also wanted music for his workers. Mrs. Taylor decided to investigate. Early in her researches she encountered Wynford Reynolds of the B.B.C., who had the same idea, and they joined forces. Before long Reynolds's programme was being broadcast daily to hundreds of factories, and Mrs. Taylor had a waiting list for her gramophone records.

Now, after ten years of study and observation, Mrs. Taylor knows just what kind of music workers need and like, and what pays in increased production and improved morale.

During the war she was once called upon to relieve a tense emotional situation in an aircraft factory. A bomb had dropped on the works, killing a number of employees. After that, the air raid warning invariably started a stampede from the shops to the shelter. Then, when the all-clear sounded, workers strolled so slowly and reluctantly back to their benches that production began to sag.

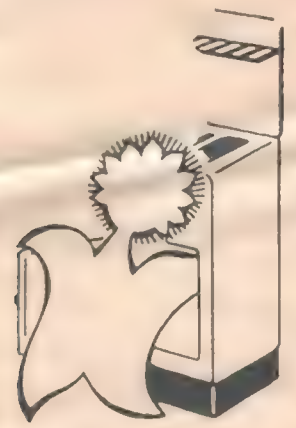
Mrs. Taylor's music changed everything. At the wail of the siren an inspiring march spread confidence and order. Keeping time to its steady beat, the workers filed sedately to the shelter. When the all-clear sounded, an equally irresistible quick march hurried them back to work. Before long the factory's production graph was showing an impressive rise.

Although Mrs. Taylor's firm is a pioneer, she lays no claim to inventing the idea of music for

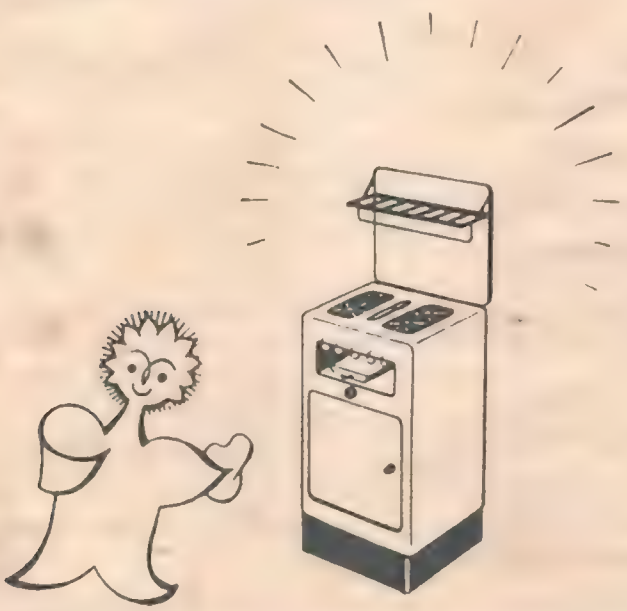


Just a regular 'do' —and your cooker's like new

Your gas cooker does a wonderful job in making the most of your food and gas supplies — but it is all the better for a little care and attention. Clean the burners occasionally with a stiff brush. Remove grease from the burner-holes with a pipe-cleaner or hairpin. Give the frets of the grill a bath, now and again, in hot soapy water.



Allow the oven to heat up for 15 minutes before putting in the dish. Don't overcrowd — allow room for the heat to circulate freely. After cooking, wipe the oven while still warm with a damp cloth. Once a week take out the shelves and wash them. A little attention means much better cooking and makes the most of the gas you burn, thus keeping down the bills. Your cooker will still be 'good as new'.



Take care of your cooker — and use gas wisely — in your own and the Nation's interest.

Issued by THE GAS COUNCIL

workers. Sea shanties and work songs are part of the folklore of nearly every nation.

The late Sir Robert Davies claimed to be one of the first British employers to install music in his works. Thirty years ago, some of his employees had to march up and down at four miles an hour, testing gas masks. To break the monotony, he played such stirring marches as "Soldiers of the Queen" on a gramophone. The effect on the men was so marked that the works has had music ever since. Now, every shop is linked up with radio.

When Mrs. Taylor first began putting music into production, some trade unionists objected in the belief that it was a form of speed-up. For the most part, they were soon won over. "Music in factories is introduced primarily to relieve the boredom and fatigue of workers doing dull, repetitive jobs," Mrs. Taylor points out. "It is in no sense a speed-up, although we believe that it automatically increases production."

Once, it increased production so much that Lyons almost lost a valuable employee. She was forewoman in one of the bakery shops. It was near Christmas, and one of the jobs was to put out a quota of plum puddings. Music was introduced to make the job easier. After the first day the forewoman issued an ultimatum. "Either the music goes or I go," she said. "It's put me back ten years." The manager asked for an explanation.

"Ever since this music started," she said, "the girls finish the puddings so fast that I have to help on the conveyor belt. That's the job I had when I started ten years ago, and I don't want to go back to it."

Tired Spirits Are Lifted

"Music has no relation to the speed or rhythm of an operation," Mrs. Taylor says. Production increases after the introduction of music, not because the operator works in time to the music, but because his spirits are lifted. Programmes are usually put on in fatigue periods, just before closing time and just before lunch.

Mrs. Taylor thinks the best music has a simple familiar melody and a well-defined rhythm. Classical music and boogie-woogie are equally unsuitable for a factory because the rhythms are too complicated.

She has found that mental workers do not, as a rule, respond to music on the job. A distinguished exception is the Bank of England. Not long ago the Bank found that output was falling in departments where many girls were employed. When the Bank first hired girls, it insisted upon high intelligence. Later, when batteries of calculating machines were introduced and the girls' work became mechanized, boredom and lassitude were more noticeable than they might have been in a less intelligent group. Production continued to drop. Finally, the Bank got in touch with the B.B.C., who put officials on to Mrs. Taylor. "Now," says the Bank, "they have music while they work, and morale is terrific."

Once, Mrs. Taylor was called in to solve a production problem that developed *after* music was installed. The welfare officer in this factory was choosing his own programme, and output was falling. Mrs. Taylor listened to his selection of records and discovered that several times a day he was playing "Deep in the Heart of Texas." When the band sang and clapped during the number, the workers stopped and clapped, too. So the manufacturer took Mrs. Taylor's service, which excludes comedy songs in which the audience takes part.

"Sinatra Means Scalpings"

Mrs. Taylor always advises an employer not to allow workers to bring their own records. "It invariably leads to trouble," she says. "They bring vocals, and these aren't suitable." The ideal industrial programme, she feels, is all orchestral. "People have a tendency to sentimentalize over vocalists. I'm sure there would be a record number of scalpings if Frank Sinatra were played in a machine shop."

Her customers have a choice of two services. The first comprises three sets of eight ten-inch records, each making two half-hour programmes. Thereafter, each week, one of the original sets is replaced. This costs £60 a year. The second service is much the same, except that more sets are involved and the price is £100.

Against her better judgment, and because of pressure from workers, she provides a supplementary service with two vocal selections in each programme. With 250,000 records to choose from she has evolved a cast-iron system of checking, to make sure that no factory ever gets the same record twice. "This is one of the worst faults of programmes made up by a non-professional," she says. "Workers are irritated by repeats."

She spends one or two days each week in factories discussing production and staff problems with employers, and collecting data for her investigations. At present she is planning a survey to find out if music should be specially keyed for industry.

"We think that in certain cases music might be more suitable for industry in one key than in another, so we are going to investigate," she says. No matter what conclusions are reached, however, commercially recorded music will still be used.

"For the time being this is the only economic and practical solution," she says. "But I can foresee the time when music will be specially produced, and perhaps even specially written, for industry."

THE END

TAKE MY TIP

MY small son loves pulling drawers open. Once he pulled a cutlery drawer too far and it came right out. So I fitted all the drawers he can reach with a safety device.

It is a piece of wood about two inches long and half an inch wide, and is fitted, with a single screw, to the back of the drawer so that it sticks up about half an inch and catches on the frame if the drawer is pulled out too far.

When I want to take the drawer out for cleaning I just twist the piece of wood until it lies horizontally.—Arthur Guest, Carlisle.

JOHN BULL *pays three guineas, on publication, for simple, original tips that show other readers how to carry out useful jobs in better ways. Address contributions to TAKE MY TIP,* JOHN BULL, *189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1, including (if they help) diagrams or photographs with the text.*

THE HAPPY HUNTED

Continued from page 8

possibilities and the difficulties. His own plot for opening a bricked-up window and sliding down a rope had been put before the escape committee, which vetoed it on various grounds, the main objection being his scheme for leaving Italy. Believing I might get permission in view of my rank, he very generously allowed me to re-register it; and so, eventually, my name went down, with official blessing, as a "starter."

Our escape committee laid down that escaping meant "return to duty," not merely getting out of the camp for a run in the country. Any attempt must therefore include a reasonable plot to leave the confounded country as well as the camp. After assessing the various ways and means, I decided to try the railway in preference to walking or stealing a bicycle. The six words of Italian required for buying my ticket were easily learned: "*Seconda classe ritorno Milano Centrale.*" My accent was hopeless, but that did not matter provided it produced the goods.

The next major problem was disguise. My "going away" kit was simple. Our only Merchant Navy skipper, whose name escapes me but whose generosity will never be forgotten, loaned me his blue mackintosh, a garment beyond price under our conditions of existence. Somebody produced an equally valuable golf windjammer, the perfect winter wear, and an officer who specialized in cap production made me a cloth cap, from a corner of an old blanket, that bluffed the experts until they looked for the lining. This ensemble ended in Italian khaki trousers and British army boots, not very natty but perfect for walking over hills.

An Expert Forgery

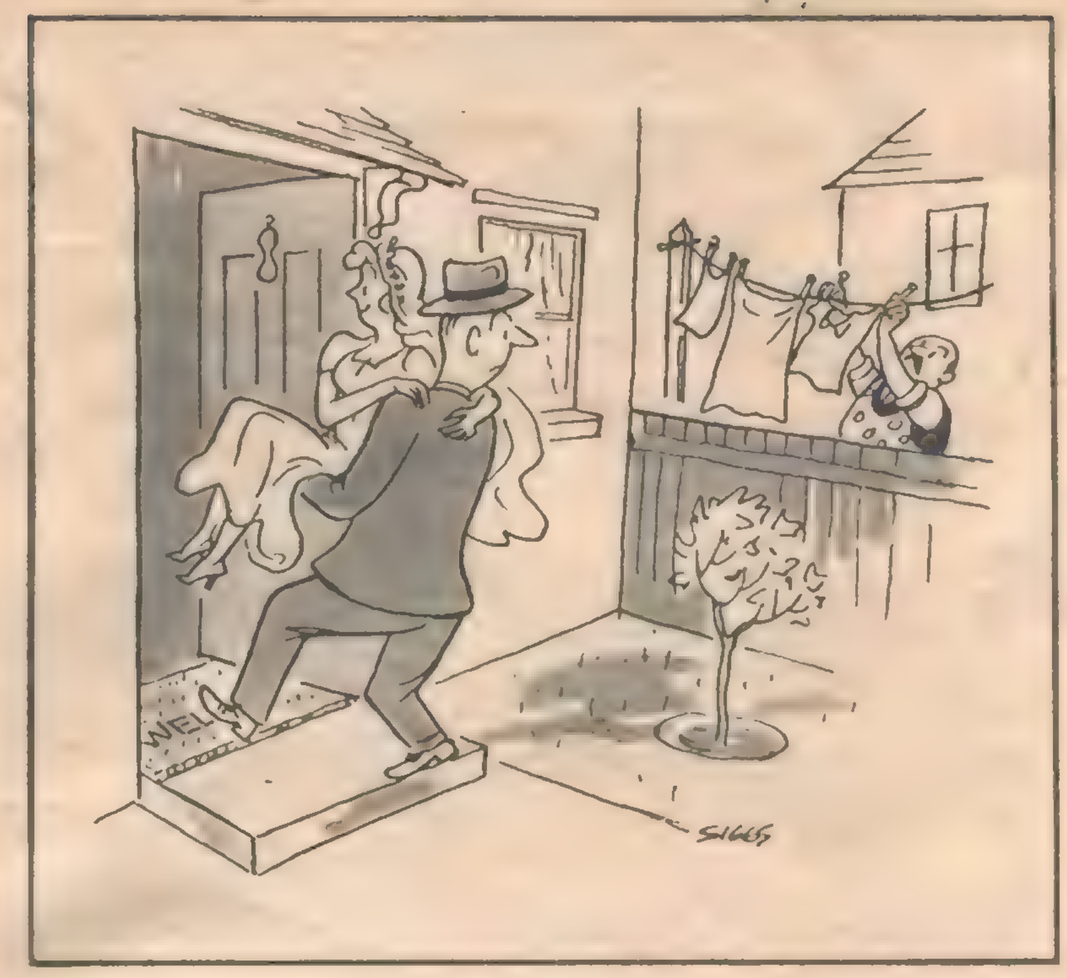
One day, looking through Italian propaganda illustrated papers, we saw a close-up photograph of a Jugoslav collaborator serving with the German paratroops. His badges and his turn-out generally were distinctive, unusual and easy to fake. Moreover, I spoke sufficient German by now, and I knew enough paratroop jargon to talk the part.

Accordingly, we got busy producing Sergeant X from Ljubljana, who had air-hiked to Piacenza for a few days' leave and wished to see Lake Como on the Swiss border. The relevant information was written on an imposing pass in German script by Major Josef Kazak, our only Polish representative—and an excellent soldier and friend by any standards. Then another expert added the details—the office stamps of "my regimental headquarters." Perfect forgery by an expert draughtsman: in peacetime, a senior official of Egyptian Surveys; in war, Major Clayton, D.S.O., of the Long Range Desert Group.

Such perfect work cost time: at least one month per stamp. Having recorded the identity, we now got busy on copying the uniform. Someone had an old tunic, nicely faded, which looked most realistic when strewn with dummy badges made by expert embroiderers. The headgear constituted no problem. An old cheesecutter cap became quite Continental when the side and back overlap was turned in, and the flap of a coloured side-cap fastened round it. We gambled on the colours; after all, the risk of meeting a fellow-Jugoslav paratrooper was unlikely.

Penalty Was Death

I had no intention of donning this alleged enemy uniform unless the heat and the hunt were really on. Slipping into a public toilet in a blue mackintosh, for which the Caribinieri (Italian police) were searching, and coming out as a parachutist in full warpaint might fool them. It was, however, like matrimony, not to be undertaken "lightly or wantonly," because the embarrassing penalty for wearing enemy uniform was death. And one might not have the chance to argue that the kit was British clothing slightly converted. So



the beautiful cap and tunic travelled in my pack, and Sergeant X had permission (on his pass) to wear mufti.

One more most important item had to be prepared. It was essential to have "George the Dummy" as replacement in my bed: necessitated by the Italian routine of coming round any time between midnight and dawn and checking us. The essential feature of this dummy was its head.

Here my decrepit South African helmet, which I had picked up on my desert escape, and was still my only headgear on reaching Campo 29, paid a handsome final dividend. Some artist used the cork lining as a base, and with a fringe of hair glued on, some brown boot polish, an extra chunk stuck in for the ear, and some very cunning painting, produced a copy of my bald head, slightly sunburnt, which, when tucked into the bedclothes, fooled everyone. Hil Evans and the artist had a dummy run with Doc O'Neill, by bringing him along one evening to see me, as a patient. The doctor switched on the light, said, "He's asleep; I'll come again later"—and we were satisfied.

This completed our general preparations, except for collecting all available information regarding the Swiss frontier in the Lake Como district. Although at least two officers had lived there on holidays, their recollections were hazy and contradictory in details vital to escaping—such as where the frontier fence ran and how it was constructed. One useful point came out of it. Round the lakeside two miles beyond Como was a famous hotel called Villa d'Este, which any visitor would be justified in asking for.

The Vital Sentry

Italians occupied the ground floor of our quarters in Campo 29, and we lived on the first and second floors above. Outside was a yard stretching from the main camp entrance, eighty yards west, to a clutter of farm buildings, and enclosed by the usual high fence of barbed wire. Directly opposite our building a gateway, also wired, opened into the farm lane.

The eastern courtyard—that is, the one on top of the T—was surrounded by a high stone wall and an outer barbed wire fence, both pierced by big iron gates close to the building. These gates formed the front entrance to our prison area and were the vital factor in making my escape feasible. A sentry stood, lounged or strolled—according to mood—outside them. But for thirty seconds some time during the night he left his post and was busy opening up the gates and closing them again when the orderly officer entered on his rounds to check us in bed.

For thirty seconds this sentry could not see the end wall of the building. In four seconds I could slide down a rope from the first floor—but whether it was possible to cross the yard and negotiate the fence before he reappeared could be tried only on the night.

Someone, I think the ubiquitous Major Brian Upton, a rabid escaper, plaited a rope from strips of linen sheeting. Evans and I tried it in the stairwell one night after the orderly officer's visit. Wearing gloves, I had no grip at all and fell with a dull thud on to the bottom stair. I walked back rubbing my stern and said to Hil: "The damned gloves are useless. Can't get a grip. I'll try again without them."

The scars of that second drop are still with me. Falling too fast and trying to grip harder, I burned my fingers almost to the bone. Despite anything our doctors could do, those burns gave me absolute hell for ten days. Having learned the hard way, we sought out the experts and were shown the Alpine method of controlling one's descent by sitting in the rope.

Fooled The Caribs

My next problem was how to get out of the building itself—not an easy matter at all. The windows at the end of the corridors on our floors were heavily barred, and the Caribinieri—known as Caribs for short—carefully checked all bars by day and by night. In addition the end windows of our rooms had been bricked up inside, leaving the glass and outer shutters intact.

As I lived on the second floor, I arranged, because it would be less difficult, to escape from an end room on the first floor. Here we put a wardrobe against the bricked-up window, and waited a month for the Carib reaction. They checked bars on the other windows of this room, which looked out on to a raised promenade surrounding an out-of-bounds courtyard, but ignored the wardrobe.

One evening, under cover of a squeeze-box concert, Hil Evans neatly removed a square of bricks, digging out the mortar with his much-prized jack-knife. Taking out the glass called for some finesse because of the sentries about. We solved this by putting paper smeared with malt—having no glue—over the pane, then gently cracking it and extracting the fragments.

The shutter ran in an iron frame which could be pushed out, enabling us to reconnoitre the vital area. You can imagine the thrill of peering into forbidden territory for the first time and watching the sentry below. When the time came to go, I could also sit on the window-sill jammed up behind the shutter and wait for the drop.

Three other factors directly concerned us—sentries, lights and the movements of the orderly officer. The vital sentry who controlled our entrance gates I have already mentioned. But there were two other important sentries.

One patrolled along the raised promenade surrounding the out-of-bounds courtyard. This sentry was on a level with my escape window but could not see movement down the end wall. But another sentry, responsible for the camp main gate, whose night post was under the guardroom porch, could see the rope trick if looking that way.

The lighting system did not help, either. In addition to numerous perimeter lights, there were strong floodlights controlled both by a master switch in the main-gate guardroom and also individually by a switch alongside the local sentry. Orders allowed the sentries to put the floods on whenever they felt inclined, and they did so with damnable irregularity, particularly if bored or jittered.

Timing of the escape depended on when the Italian orderly officer decided to come inside for the bed-by-bed check. This again depended entirely on when his sergeant woke him up. Any minute between midnight and five o'clock the procession suddenly marched out of the guardroom and down the yard. I had just one minute, before they reached the gates, in which to make the final decision to drop off and gamble on the thirty seconds when the sentry was busy.

A Chance Missed

The very first night we opened up the window, I crouched on the sill for more than an hour, but the orderly officer failed to appear. Conditions seemed ideal—good fog, all the sentries happy, no floodlights. No need to hurry, we decided; plenty more such opportunities. So I scrambled back with some difficulty, cold and cramped. In the next two months, despite a nightly watch with everything ready to go at ten minutes' notice, there never was a better chance.

Our timing depended, too, on the Rome Express, which passed through Piacenza at 7.25 a.m., according to the timetable, and went nonstop to Milan Central. Catching that meant a marvellous flying start. Traversing the ten miles to Piacenza was a local electric train which ran through Ponte d'Olio, only ten minutes' walk from Campo 29.

However, on the early trains so many daily passengers travelled to work in the city that a stranger would be most conspicuous. Walking to Piacenza during the night appeared the best answer. Allowing four hours to tramp ten miles and dodge the local Caribs, the latest I could leave our hostel was 3.30 a.m. But on many nights the confounded orderly officer came round too late.

As night after night passed, with Evans and I opening up the window, peering out—and doing nothing definite, the six owners of the room became rather brassed-off. Justifiably so, really, because they were certainties for the cells, as accomplices, when the escape was discovered. Major Jimmy Williamson, of Royal Tanks, whose bed was nearest the hole, had become more heavily involved. My room was nearly a hundred yards distant, on the second floor, so after I was nearly intercepted by the orderly officer as I rushed back rather late, Jimmy volunteered to sleep in my bed and let me, or the dummy, stay in his.

Dummy's Legs Moved

Even the dummy was made more elaborate because the Italians were suspicious and inclined to pull the bedclothes off a sleeper who had wrapped up extra tight. In addition to the elaborate head, we used animated legs for the first time, based on the scheme that, when the orderly officer shone his torch, someone in the next bed pulled a string and the dummy straightened its legs.

When I dropped down, Hil Evans would lower my pack on a string, pull up the rope, fix the dummy, replace the bricks in the wall—and dash back to his own virtuous couch. With Jimmy Williamson sleeping peacefully in my bed, with luck the Italians would never

know I was gone until roll-call next day, and possibly even longer.

Spurred on by criticism and heavy betting, and even more by information that the guardroom sentry was not posted outside the door, I departed on a clear, frosty night.

One very lucky break had occurred that afternoon. The Italians carted snow through the farm gateway, and the lock was defective. When they finished for the day, the gate was closed by placing a large stone against it.

For forty long, frozen minutes I crouched on the sill. At about five o'clock, the guardroom door opened with a crash and the night rounds tramped down the yard. As they passed underneath, Hil Evans pushed me off, and I was away to a flying start. But not so good: six feet below were electric light wires. I fouled them and wasted precious seconds kicking clear, then dropped with a jarring thud. Hil Evans pulled up the rope and lowered my pack on a string, but my fingers were so numbed I couldn't undo the slipknot.

The thirty seconds had already gone; no time now to cross the yard, so I dived round the building, trailing string, and crouched in the darkest corner below the promenade—and the sentry above. No challenge or excitement at the guardroom porch—evidently the sentry there was inside. Slamming the outer gate, the first and vital sentry tramped back along his beat, turned facing me only five yards away, paused a lifetime—and then marched back again.

Free At Last

My only chance now was the farm gateway. I started cat-walking across the yard, but the thin ice over the ruts cracked like pistol shots, and I had to bellycrawl the remaining way up to the gate. I moved the stone holding it shut, slid through, put the stone back again and crawled on down the lane, free at last but still in view of the promenade sentry. Forty yards ahead, an early labourer walked across and through the farm entrance. Muffled up and half-frozen, he saw and heard nothing.

Quickly changing into my semi-civilian outfit—the sailor's blue raincoat and home-made cap—I tramped off hilariously along the road, thumbing my nose at the camp main entrance in passing.

Before I had gone half a mile, winding round the hills towards the local railway, all the floodlights flared on at my late asylum, and the alarm blared out. I was away, but with a mighty short start. Nor was it possible to travel on the road; people moving in the farms drove me off cross-country to flounder through muddy puddles sheathed with ice and heaped-up snow. Church bells were ringing—to me, full of the fugitive feeling, obviously a general alarm.

Going down the last hill to Ponte d'Olio bridge I noticed two figures on it and promptly decided they were Caribs or a military patrol. Sooner than risk the crossing, I walked another two miles along the railway to the next station.

Hanging around the station in the rather chilly dawn, afraid to go in and buy a ticket, I watched the locals gather for the early rush to work in Piacenza. When the electric train—three carriages only—came hurtling in, I joined on the back of the scrum which was heaving its way into already crowded compartments.

A Dark Signorina

Jammed like sardines, I found myself clinging desperately to an upright—with a nicely rounded, black-eyed, red-lipped signorina resting herself against my arm. Nothing could have been better for taking one's mind off the nightmare of detection. The very aged conductor fought his way through the press, and I bought a ticket with magnificent aplomb.

Arriving in Piacenza with only five minutes to catch the main-line train, I dashed across the plaza into the station. Here, however, an unexpected obstacle complicated the race. My money was very carefully stowed away; so much so, that I had to join the rapidly lengthening ticket queue and then, on the way up to the office, carry out some amazing contortions and slitting of garments. Anyway, the necessary funds emerged on time and my *"seconda classe ritorno Milano Centrale"* rang the bell at once. No papers demanded, no questions asked. That represented a really stiff obstacle successfully negotiated.

On The Rome Express

Ten minutes later the Rome Express roared in; late, but not too late. While I waited on the far platform an officer's party, armed to the teeth, marched on and proceeded to search the restaurant, lavatories, and other lurking places, presumably for me. Before they worked out far enough, the train had come and gone.

Another crowded move, this time among the "standing-room only" section in the corridor. The Italian railways had one sensible rule, which I strongly recommend; once the seats were filled in the compartments, everyone else must stand—in the corridors. The firstcomers thus travelled in comfort without being trodden on, and the corridors were packed. Those present included two Italian officers, a sergeant and two German pilots. They ignored all the civilians, including me, despite my muddy boots and pack.

Fifty minutes across the fertile Po River flats brought us into Milan Central Station. Once more I bustled off the train in the thick of the field, to buy my ticket for the next leg on to the frontier near Como.

Except for a slight misunderstanding of my pronunciation—the Italians call it "Cormo"—the machine punched out the necessary magic slip without argument. But an unexpected problem now intervened. An inquiry addressed in pantomime to an old boy in a funny hat, who seemed to run trains, produced the depressing news that the next one for Como left at 1 p.m.

Despite the lifetime of alarms and excursions experienced since 5 a.m., only four and a half hours had elapsed. With the hunt on and the certainty of a general warning, even three hours' delay was serious. Changing over to a bicycle or walking the remaining fifty kilometres did not appeal to me, so I decided to fill in the time as profitably as possible and hope for the best. The main principle was to smother that hunted feeling.

First things first. Over in one corner was a shoeshine, who removed the mud for five lira, and raised my morale terrifically because he believed my Jugoslav story, as told in near-German. Another pantomime conversation with the old lady in charge of the *gabinettoes* (toilets), indicated that hot baths were "on tap"—an excellent means of combining obscurity, time-saving and pleasure.

Saving that one for future use, I went on a general tour of the station, really in search of food and drink—especially drink. Suddenly a large placard caught my eye, headed *"Treni in arrivio,"* obviously the current schedule of incoming traffic; equally obviously the adjacent *"Treni in partenza"* meant departures. Checking this produced an express leaving at noon for Switzerland via Como, crossing the border about five kilometres farther on at the town of Chiasso. An hour less waiting might save me.

Feeling on top of the world again, I walked into the first-class restaurant, an enormous room containing some thirty clients and double that number of waiters. Lingering over coffee, an hour passed. Then lunch appeared for the staff, so I decided eating had priority over cleanliness and started to pick a meal from the menu. Unfortunately *"minestrone"* proved to be merely watery soup containing thin worms of "pasta," a particularly nasty form of macaroni, which we ate at the camp, mostly reluctantly, every day. Otherwise a reasonable meal was politely and efficiently served, rounded off with brandy and coffee.

With half an hour to go, I hustled back on to the platform—as my empty train backed in. This time, being very much in the first wave, I managed to grab a corner seat. The next arrival was an Italian captain—evidently a doctor, judging by his badges.

Forgetting my lowly status as a civilian and hoping to discourage curiosity I said: "It's a good day" in near-German. He looked at me as if I were a lesser bacillus caught straying in an operating theatre, and put up his paper, insulating me completely. Our compartment filled up with civilians and one more officer, all quite harmless.

Off again punctually at noon, for a delightful hour's running through a green, friendly countryside, overlaid by cornflower sky, bright with sunshine. Along the northern skyline stretched the jagged snow peaks of the Alps, unbroken except for the gap immediately ahead where three famous lakes make an accessible frontier. In that gap was freedom. Only a deer-fence of barbed wire and an unknown system of guards lay between.

My Bluff Worked

One stop short of Como, the passport officials came through, collecting the papers of passengers for Switzerland and at the same time checking all civilians. I produced my pass in German, with its imposing stamps, plus return tickets to Piacenza, and was accepted immediately.

At Como Station I followed the medico-captain closely through the barrier, and so passed the Caribs, who stood by, watching passengers without actually checking papers. On emerging into the street, I found a beautiful scene. Between steep, brown, snow-smeared hills lay an Oxford-blue, mirror-smooth lake, with closely packed white buildings filling the slopes leading down to the shore. All very lovely—but my immediate interest was getting through the town. Somewhere beyond it the frontier wire ran across those brown ridges.

Quick decisions pay most dividends. An ancient cab with an incredibly aged horse offered one solution. "Villa D'Este!" I ordered, climbing in and naming the famous hotel situated three miles round the lake.

"Villa D'Este chiuso!" ("Villa D'Este closed") he answered, shaking his head.

"Bene! Villa D'Este strada!" ("O.K. Villa D'Este Street, then") I came back, drawing heavily on my Italian vocabulary. He muttered something but whipped up the old horse and off we started.

Clop-hopping through the town I was so conspicuous as to be above suspicion. Queen Victoria driving round a London park with old John Brown did not attract more attention. Children waiting for a bus laughed and called out facetious remarks. We duly emerged on the lakeside beyond the town.

Cabby Rumbled Me

My only desire now was to get clear into the hills, but the road hugged the water's edge. No break appeared for nearly two miles. Then a valley opened up, just short of the high ridge which was really my objective. Again the flat ground was packed tight with stone buildings, but a side road turned off from the lake and I decided to try that direction.

By this time my interest in the hills had become so apparent to the cabby that he knew the answer. I was for the border, and he wanted some pickings out of the trip. He muttered something about Swiss francs, to which I replied: *"Va Bene"* ("All right"), and on we went.

Round the first corner was an open-air café where two soldiers in Alpini hats sat drinking. To me just two more Italian troops, but much more than that to the driver. Round the next corner, a lane opened up, leading

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

My mind was not really on being photographed when this was taken. I was just six and had started to play an instrument. Ever since I was two or so, I had been cutting make-believe cornets out of cardboard and pretending to play them, but now I had a tenor horn of my own to play, and I thought of it every minute of the day.

My father was a London General Omnibus coachbuilder by trade, but in his mind this was only secondary to playing the cornet in the company's brass band, which he founded.

He always expected me to follow in his footsteps, and unless I had completed the musical tasks he set me, it was the slipper for me when he came home each night.

I played in the Wandsworth Borough Band when I was seven. At the Crystal Palace championships, the music stands were a fixed height, and when I stood up to play I was nowhere near my music. So, while the thousands in the audience grew restive, there was a hurried search for a ginger-beer case. After five minutes they managed to find one, I climbed up, and the band was able to begin.

At thirteen, I went to work in the same workshops as my father. I got three-halfpence an hour as an apprentice, and we worked from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Three years later, my father contracted sleepy sickness and I had to get a better job to support the family.

I left the coachbuilders, and joined up with five other lads in a street band. I had graduated to trombones then—my reach was just long enough. We did very well, sometimes taking home as much as £10 a week each. We had our regular pitches and became very popular. Once a man dashed out of a building and invited us to make gramophone records. We did, and that added to our income.

Then the relief pianist—his name was Jack Hylton—at the Queen's Hall Roof, a night-club on top of Queen's Hall, heard me play and asked me to come along and try for a job there. I got it. But before leaving the street band, I was arrested with the others for causing obstruction while playing outside the Savoy Hotel.

He has since played inside the Savoy as a famous musician. See page 31 for his name

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The main secret of salad making lies in clever arrangement of the ingredients.

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An American favourite recipe

2 cups of hot diced potatoes. ½ green pepper, chopped. 2 slices of crisp lean bacon, chopped. 1 tablespoon of chopped onion. 6 stuffed olives, halved. Kraft Salad Cream.

Mix thoroughly. Decorate with chopped parsley and serve very cold.

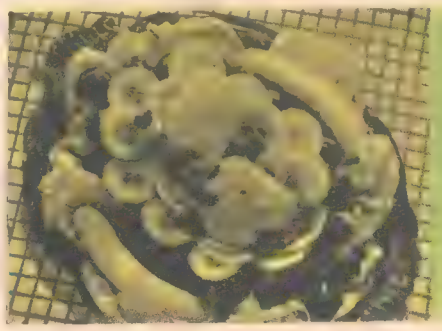
My favourite Salad — BY YVONNE ARNAUD

MIXED RAW SALAD (*not illustrated*). *Cut 3 apples in little cubes. Cut a little beetroot, also in cubes. Cut some celery in small pieces. Cut or grate some raw savoy cabbage in fine pieces.*

Mix all the ingredients with mayonnaise, then grate some walnuts or almonds on top. Make sure that the salad bowl is really cold, and serve ingredients quite cold.

Yvonne Arnaud

from "282 Ways of Making a Salad" by Bebe Daniels & Jill Allgood



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SALADS

by the Kraft Home Cook

The ingredients of a salad should be perfectly dry.

• • •

Use inside leaves of lettuce whenever possible. They are crisper, fresher, and a better colour.

• • •

To peel tomatoes, dip swiftly into boiling water, then the skins will slip off easily.

• • •

Kraft Salad Cream, with its delicate, smooth flavour, adds the perfect finish to your salad.

USE FRESH FRUIT IN YOUR SALADS, TOO!

You'll find that oranges, apples, pears, or grapes make a wonderful addition to your salad—bananas, too, if you can get them. Just make a plain green salad and add the fruit, cut in portions or sliced wafer-thin. Serve with Kraft Salad Cream—it's unusual and so appetizing.

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STAR give perfect shaves longer because they're "Duridium-Processed"

(R.D.D.)

"I'M QUITE satisfied with my present blades, thank you—so why should I change?" You should change because now you can have an even better shave—a *much* better shave. Now, for the first time, you can have Star double-edge blades that have been "duridium-processed". These are the only "duridium-processed" blades made, and they give a smoother, closer shave than you can possibly get with blades made the ordinary way. Once over with a Star blade and you're clean!

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Fits all double-edge razors

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If in any way dissatisfied, return blades to Ever-Ready Razor Products Ltd. (Star Division), London, N.W.9. and your money will be refunded.

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Shave with a new Star double-edge blade, then rub your finger-tips across your face "against the grain". That will give you proof that Star blades shave cleaner, smoother.

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FIT ALL DOUBLE-EDGE RAZORS

5 for 1/- everywhere

An Ever-Ready Razor Product

to steps on the hillside and an upper road. *Commune of San Josephe*, the notice said. Just exactly what I wanted.

I jumped out, grabbed my pack and offered a fifty-lira note, at least double fare. He burst into song in Italian and French on the motif of Swiss francs. I then produced a second fifty note. As he took it, round the corner came the two Alpini, rifles at the ready.

Bulldog Drummond or Lemmie Caution would have seen the answer in a flash and taken the correct avoiding action. I couldn't see the solution then—or now. If I had run for it I would have made an easy target. Besides, my pass seemed the right answer. Greeting them in German, I produced it on demand. They were not impressed, partly because they could not read it, mainly because they knew instinctively I was a wrong 'un.

So Near Freedom

Then the real horror of the situation struck me. These were Customs guards—real professional smellers-out, capable of picking a suspect at fifty yards. No thick-headed Alpini, but professional wolves in mountain sheep's clothing. I had hit the last fence hard, travelling too fast.

Lack of a passport was sufficient to run me in, so in I went. The miserable cabby promptly whipped up his aged horse and disappeared, still clutching my hundred lire. We tramped 200 metres along the street—and there was the frontier barrier and the deer fence running up the ridge on one side and edging the valley road on the other. Beyond it the countryside looked exactly the same—white stone houses, terraced vineyards, freshly sprouting corn. But those farmers cutting timber were free people, and the solidly built young Swiss soldiers lounging round the stable fifty yards away might have been New Zealanders in working kit.

Walking round the fence for nearly a mile to the main customs post at Chiasso was just hell. Two guards and the nine-foot fence separated me from freedom. In daylight on a busy thoroughfare, direct action was not on; besides, they were now beginning to believe my story.

Experts at headquarters soon settled that. The routine search produced a tiny map in English—which I had never used and forgotten to destroy, my silver N.Z. identity disc, retained for sentiment, and a cake of soap marked "Lever Bros." The last settled my case. Evidently this brand of soap was well known to the Italian customs, for they seized on it at once. Also, soap was an almost unobtainable luxury.

Hasty Confession

At this stage, still struggling to put over my Croat identity, I confessed to a knowledge of America, having been three years in the States! The reaction was immediate and quite unexpected. I must be an American parachutist, in mufti, bent on sabotage, therefore eligible for summary execution. When the commandant started discussing ways and means—or rather the best place—I hastily gave in and confessed. In five minutes he produced wine and an armchair in his private office. The routine telegram announcing my escape had arrived an hour earlier, though nobody expected to see me there so soon, if at all.

The depressing return is quickly told. Three personal searches and four interrogations, as I was passed on from one to another, filled in the time until 8.30 p.m., when I was put aboard the train, closely guarded by a Carib officer and two plain-clothes police.

We drove through the main gates of Campo 29 at 1 a.m., cold, cramped and most unhappy—to be greeted by the officer interpreter and our local Caribs. The latter gave me a fourth personal search as I stood stripped stark naked in a freezing cell.

Then the commandant appeared and said the right things. Bad luck for me, but very glad to see me back. Had I been fed? I could sleep in my own bed, but would probaby have to go into the jail when he reported next morning. A sportsman and therefore rather rare. He was dismissed, of course, shortly afterwards.

What happened in Campo 29 after my departure is worth telling. Hil Evans worked like greased lightning, helped by the very excited and delighted room; he got the rope in, closed the shutter, put back the wardrobe and settled "Dummy George," complete with string attachment. No time to replace the bricks, which were neatly stacked under the bed; Hil put something in front of them and dashed off to bed, well pleased with his work.

Meantime, the orderly officer and his entourage tramped their rounds, fortunately starting on my floor. They passed Jimmy Williamson sleeping peacefully in my bed, and some minutes later reached the vital room below. All according to plan, when the torch turned on "George," his legs moved perfectly. But some light went under the bed, and the Carib, from his angle farther down the room, saw a corner of brick. A torrent of Italian, then screams when they shook "George" and thus discovered him. Major Williamson was missing! Where? How? Sound the alarm! Absolute pandemonium.

The Carib found the hole in ten seconds. Putting the room crew under close arrest, the Italians left a sentry who was unusually intelligent, because he recognized Jimmy and grabbed him as he tried for home base when the alarm rang out.

And here Lady Luck intervened on my behalf. The alarm meant that all officer prisoners must parade immediately in the dining-hall for check. Italians, however, show great respect for rank, even with prisoners. Instead of ordering me out of bed, and without checking a second time that I was there, they placed a sentry in the corridor and left me presumably asleep. They collected Williamson and, after five or six counts down below, they found the tally correct.

In For Thirty Days

Not until 7 a.m., two hours after my morning departure, did someone think of looking in my room, and then the excitement frothed up again to an all-time high.

The tumult and shouting gradually died down, only to flare up at intervals as the countryside zealously reported imaginary Cliftons slinking here and there. Then back I came, having at least had a run for the escape committee's money.

I spent a month in the cells, having received "thirty days' solitary," the usual — and maximum — sentence allowed under the Geneva Convention. On my twenty-eighth day the axe fell. In came an interpreter with orders for me to pack and be ready to depart in four hours. My destination? Gavi, or Campo 5—the hell camp of Italy!

NEXT WEEK: We stage a tunnel break from the "no-escape" fortress

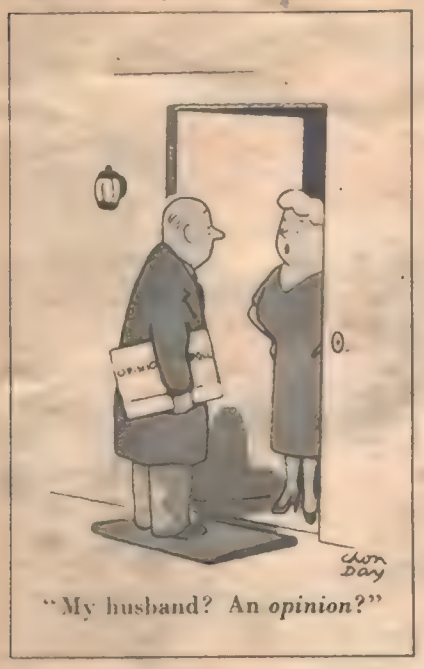
THE HUMAN MACHINE

Courtesy

AN Englishwoman, who has long lived abroad, recently came home for six months. "It's been a sad experience," she said to me. "England seems to have lost all its grace. No one seems to have any consideration for anyone else."

This is a sad commentary. To be considerate and courteous costs nothing but a little thought and effort—but it makes life run smoothly. It is these little virtues that give life grace, and none of us can afford not to cultivate them.

by ROFFE THOMPSON



"My husband? An *opinion*?"

TWO DOZEN ROSES

Continued from page 10

Thursday will be devoted to informal talks with ministers and members of parliament, and on Saturday we fly to Baghdad. . . ."

But Dr. Assmar was not listening. He kept gazing at the back of the grey-suited man who sat in front with the chauffeur. He was thinking: that man—what is his name?—Lieutenant Wahabi. . . . For two years now he has been my bodyguard. He never looks at me. I cannot even remember his face. Today is evil, there is danger: I know it, but I do not know why.

"Maarouf, I received this note today." He handed Maarouf a crumpled half-sheet of notepaper on which was scrawled, in Arabic, *What you are doing is against Islam and the aspirations of the Arab world. One step more, and you die.* It was signed, with a melodramatic flourish, *Ikwan el Muslimin*, Moslem Brotherhood.

"These madmen are supposed to have been disbanded. How did you get it, sir?" Maarouf was flustered.

"It was slipped into my shoe as I prayed in the mosque."

Assmar spoke quietly, but fear shivered around him. Was it his imagination, or did the grey-suited man's shoulders stiffen slightly? If there were treachery, it was very near. . . .

Meanwhile, in the coffee-bar in Soliman Pasha Street, young Saadi Atta looked at his watch and paid for his coffee. He began to saunter through the crowds towards the Midan Ismailia, where the ceremony was to take place. As he passed the flower-shop again, Mme Ekonomakis came out, locking the glass door after her. She, too, was determined to see the procession. She smiled at the young man, but he ignored her. He carried his bunch of roses in his right hand: his left was thrust deep into his pocket. His face was sulky. Seeing him, Mme Ekonomakis thought: "The girl is late. Perhaps she has changed her mind, and the flowers are wasted! Poor young man. . . ."

Reaching the corner of the Midan and Kasr el Aini, Saadi stopped, gazing over the shoulders of the white-clad rabble at the police-lined square and the sumptuous awnings in the middle. He looked about him. She had not come yet. But she would come today; he knew it in his bones. Today she would surely come.

THE chief of police said: "I am providing you with a special officer, Excellency. He will ride with you in your car when you leave the palace."

"Thank you, but that is not necessary," Dr. Assmar protested. "I have my own plain-clothes man, Wahabi, who has accompanied me for years."

"Nevertheless, Excellency——" The chief of police bowed firmly. "His name is Captain Mardam." Mardam, an enormous man in full uniform, saluted and bared his teeth in a brilliant smile. "His family comes from Syria."

This was doubtless intended to please Dr. Assmar. In fact, nothing could have unsettled him more. Once again, he felt himself surrounded by treachery. How did men of goodwill die? They might be killed by a friend whose arm was outstretched to shake hands. By a shot or a knife from out of the darkness. By a murderer dressed in a police uniform. . . .

Maarouf, seeing his master's discomfiture, gently touched his arm: "Courage, Excellency. We are in a powerful country——"

"And a dangerous one," Assmar murmured.

"It is not our hosts whom we have to fear, but our own countrymen."

"That," Assmar said, "is what I mean."

For a moment Dr. Assmar was filled with a new suspicion. Ashamed, he thrust it quickly away. Ah, heaven, if he couldn't trust Maarouf, he couldn't trust anyone.

"Be of good cheer, Excellency!" When Maarouf smiled, it was impossible to believe that he was not loyal as a dog. "The city is *en fête* for you. The common people are gathered in their thousands to welcome you. . . . Come, sir—it is time to enter the car again."

The procession, headed by the king's three crimson automobiles, moved off. The crowd, in their cotton galabiehs, yelled with excitement. The mounted police, magnificent on their cream horses, lined the trafficless streets. From windows the Egyptian and Syrian flags hung out.

"Long live Assmar Bey! Welcome to our Syrian brothers!" A group of ragged men with green banners had begun chanting. Others threw streamers and a few flowers into Assmar's car. Inching the car forward, the chauffeur managed to clear a space. They went on slowly towards the Midan Ismailia.

"They seem to like us, Maarouf. Still, they would cheer anyone; it's a pageant for them." Dr. Assmar smiled and salaamed to the crowd.

In the big square, a ceremonial tent, hung with rich carpets, had been set up. Its garish reds and golds leapt out at the blinding midday sun.

As Dr. Assmar's car turned out of Khedive Ismail Street into the square, the mounted police came up to a salute. Swords flashed. One of the horses side-stepped nervously, and Assmar's chauffeur jammed on his brakes to avoid it.

SAADI ATTA stood on the pavement a little behind the mob. His heart had begun to beat quickly; he recognized the signs. Suddenly his eyes were ablaze with happiness. She was here, she had kept her appointment! He felt her presence, though he could not see her face. He had wooed her all the years of his young life, and in a moment he would possess her. He blinked quickly, dazzled by her golden radiance. Slowly he pushed his way to the front of the mob.

Smiling, he took something from his left-hand coat pocket; a round object, about the size of a goose's egg. Deft as a conjurer, he withdrew a pin from it, placed it in the centre of the bunch of roses, and flung the nosegay with all his force into the open car.

There were two clear seconds before the explosion. Captain Mardam bent to the floor of the car, frantically trying to find the grenade and throw it out. Wahabi leapt down from the car and dashed towards Saadi with a pistol. . . .

Dr. Assmar, one arm hanging limp at his side, gasped: "Maarouf!" But Maarouf was horribly dead: the bunch of roses had fallen in his lap. Mardam, too, lay crumpled on the seat beside him. Tottering out of the car, Dr. Assmar was in time to see Wahabi fire his pistol. The double shots, after the explosion of the grenade, sounded like the reports of a popgun; but Dr. Assmar saw the young man sway and totter.

The two pieces of hot lead smashed between Saadi's eyes. But Saadi felt nothing, saw nothing but his own vision. He opened his arms to his beloved, his bride. Now, at last, he saw her face, and knew that she was Death.

THE END

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What's in Bob Martin's?

Bob Martin's Condition Powder Tablets contain vitamins of the B Group, vitamin D and calcium, iron and other minerals. These vitamins and minerals are vitally necessary for doggy good health and they are the ones your dog often doesn't get in his food. By improving his appetite and making sure he gets the full nourishment from his food, and by toning-up the dog's whole system, they provide a *natural* safeguard against loss of condition.

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Has he a thick dense coat, bright eyes and a cold damp nose?

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See how thick — how extra thick — the milk chocolate covering really is!

THEY DO IT WITH MIRRORS

Continued from page 13

with their backs to that particular stage.

How long, Miss Marple wondered, would it have taken to slip out of the room, run along the corridor, shoot Gulbrandsen and come back? Not nearly so long as one would think. Measured in minutes and seconds, a very short time indeed. . . .

What had Carrie Louise meant when she had said to her husband: "So *that's* what you believe—but you're wrong, Lewis"?

"I must say that that was a very penetrating remark of the inspector's." Alex's voice cut in on her meditations. "About a stage-set being real. Made of wood and cardboard and stuck together with glue and as real on the unpainted as on the painted side. 'The illusion,' he pointed out, 'is in the eyes of the audience.'"

"Like conjurers," Miss Marple murmured vaguely. "'They do it with mirrors' is, I believe, the slang phrase."

STEPHEN RESTARICK came in, slightly out of breath. "Hallo, Alex," he said. "That little rat, Ernie Gregg—I don't know if you remember him?"

"The one who played Feste when you did *Twelfth Night*? Quite a bit of talent there, I thought."

"Yes, he's got talent of a sort. Very good with his hands, too. Does a lot of our carpentry. However, that's neither here nor there. He's been boasting to Gina that he gets out at night and wanders about the grounds. Says he was wandering round last night, and claims he saw something."

Alex spun round. "Saw what?"

"Says he's not going to tell! Actually I'm pretty certain he's only trying to show off and get into the limelight. He's an awful liar, but I thought perhaps he ought to be questioned."

Alex said sharply: "I should leave him for a bit. Don't let him think we're too interested."

"Perhaps—yes, I think you may be right there. This evening, perhaps."

Stephen went on into the library.

Miss Marple, moving gently round the hall in her character of mobile audience, collided with Alex Restarick as he stepped back suddenly.

Miss Marple said: "I'm so sorry."

Alex frowned at her, said in an absent sort of way, "I beg your pardon," and then added, in a surprised voice: "Oh, it's *you*!"

It seemed to Miss Marple an odd remark for someone with whom she had been conversing for some considerable time.

"I was thinking of something else," said Alex Restarick. "That boy, Ernie. . . ." He made vague motions with both hands.

Then, with a sudden change of manner, he crossed the hall and went after Stephen in the library.

The murmur of voices came from behind the closed door, but Miss Marple hardly noticed them. She was concentrating on a vague something which Alex's account of Inspector Curry's remarks had stirred to life. Those remarks had given Alex an idea. She was not sure that they had not given her an idea, too. The same idea? Or a different one?

She stood where Alex Restarick had stood. She thought to herself: "This is not a real hall. This is only cardboard and canvas and wood. This is a stage scene. . . ." Scrappy phrases flashed across her mind. "Illusion." "In the eyes of the audience." "They do it with mirrors." Bowls of goldfish, yards of coloured ribbon, vanishing ladies. . . . All the panoply and misdirection of the conjurer's art. . . .

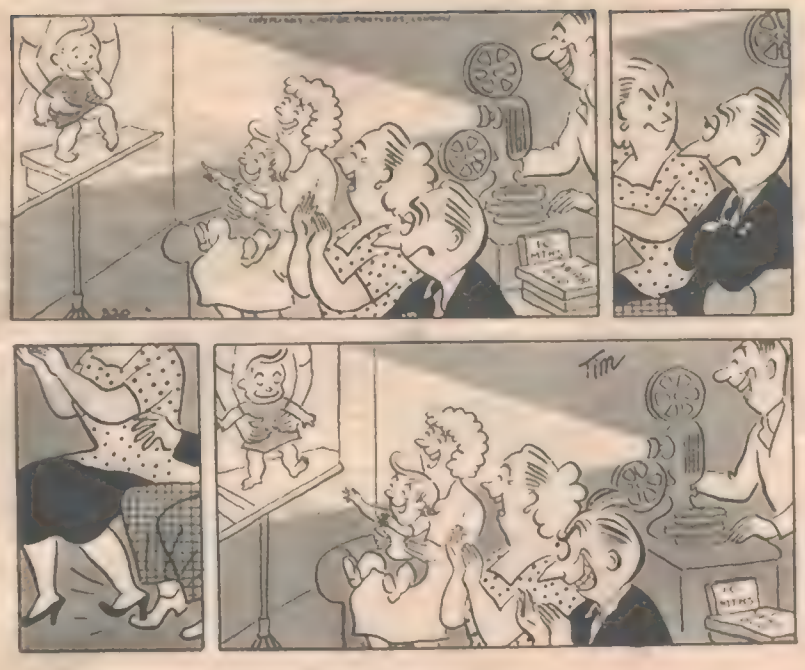
Something stirred in her consciousness. Something that Alex had said, something that he had described to her. . . . Constable Dodgett puffing and panting, running. . . . Something shifted in her mind—came into sudden focus.

"Why, of *course*!" said Miss Marple. "*That* must be it. . . ."

* * *

"Oh, Wally! How you startled me!" Gina, emerging from the shadows by the theatre, jumped back a little as

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*



the figure of Wally Hudd materialized out of the gloom. It was not yet quite dark; there was that eerie half-light when objects lose their reality and take on the fantastic shapes of nightmare.

"What are you doing down here? You never come near the theatre as a rule."

"Maybe I was looking for you, Gina. It's usually the best place to find you, isn't it?"

Wally's soft, faintly drawling voice held no special insinuation, and yet Gina flinched a little.

"It's a job, and I'm keen on it. I like the atmosphere of paint and canvas and back-stage generally."

"Yes. It means a lot to you. I've seen that. Tell me, Gina, how long do you think it will be before this business is all cleared up?"

"The inquest's tomorrow. It will just be adjourned for a fortnight or something like that. At least, that's what Inspector Curry gave us to understand."

"A fortnight," said Wally thoughtfully. "I see. Say three weeks, perhaps. And after that—we're free. I'm going back to the States, then."

"Oh! But I can't rush off like that," cried Gina. "I couldn't leave Grandam. And we've got these two new productions we're working on——"

"I didn't say *we*. I said *I* was going."

GINA stopped and looked up at her husband. Something in the effect of the shadows made him seem very big. A big, quiet figure in some way—or so it seemed to her—faintly menacing. Standing over her. Threatening—what?

"Do you mean"—she hesitated—"you don't want me to come?"

"Why, no. I didn't say that."

"You don't care if I come or not? Is that it?" She was suddenly angry.

"See here, Gina. This is where we've got to have a showdown. We didn't know much about each other when we married—not much about each other's backgrounds, not much about the other one's folks. We thought it didn't matter. We thought nothing mattered except having a swell time together. Well, stage one is over. Your folks didn't—and don't—think much of me. Maybe they're right. I'm not their kind. But if you think I'm staying on here, kicking my heels, and doing odd jobs in what I consider is just a crazy set-up—well, think again! I want to live in my own country, doing the kind of job I want to do, and can do. My idea of a wife isn't the kind you're being. Maybe I hustled you into marriage. If so, you'd better get free of me and start again. It's up to you. If you prefer one of these arty boys—it's your life and you've got to choose. But I'm going home."

"I think you're an absolute *pig*," said Gina. "I'm enjoying myself here."

"Is that so? Well, I'm not. You can even enjoy murder, I suppose?"

Gina drew in her breath sharply. "That's a cruel, wicked thing to say. I was very fond of Uncle Christian. And don't you realize that someone has been quietly poisoning Grandam for months? It's horrible!"

"I told you I didn't like it here. I don't like the kind of things that go on. I'm quitting."

"If you're allowed to! Don't you realize you'll probably be arrested for Uncle Christian's murder? I hate the way Inspector Curry looks at you. He's just like a cat watching a mouse, with a nasty sharp-clawed paw, all ready to pounce. Just because you were out of the hall, fixing those lights, and because you're not English, I'm sure they'll go fastening it on you."

"They'll need some evidence first."

Gina wailed: "I'm frightened for you, Wally. I've been frightened all along."

"No good being scared. I tell you, they've got nothing on me!"

They walked in silence to the house.

Gina said: "I don't believe you really want me to come back to America with you."

Walter Hudd did not answer.

Gina Hudd turned on him and stamped her foot. "I hate you. I hate you. You are horrible—a beast, a cruel, unfeeling beast. You don't care if you never see me again. Well, I don't care if *I* never see *you* again! I was a stupid little fool ever to marry you, and I shall get a divorce as soon as possible and I shall marry Stephen or Alex and be much happier than I ever could be with you."

"Fine!" said Wally. "Now we know where we are!"

MISS MARPLE saw Gina and Wally go into the house together. She was standing at the spot where Inspector Curry had made his experiment with Constable Dodgett earlier in the afternoon.

Miss Bellever's voice behind her made her jump. "You'll get a chill, Miss Marple, standing about like that after the sun's gone down."

Miss Marple fell meekly into step with her and they walked briskly towards the house.

"I was thinking about conjuring tricks," said Miss Marple. "So difficult when you're watching them to see how they're done, and yet, once they are explained, so absurdly simple. Did you ever see the Lady Who Is Sawn In Half? *Such* a thrilling trick. It fascinated me when I was eleven years old, I remember. And I never *could* think how it was done. But the other day there was an article in some paper giving the whole thing away. It seems it's not one girl—but *two*. The head of the one and the feet of the other. You think it's one girl and it's really two—and the other way round would work equally well, wouldn't it?"

Miss Bellever looked at her with faint surprise. Miss Marple was not often so fluffy and incoherent as this. It's been too much for the old lady, all this, she thought.

"When you only look at one side of a thing, you only see one side," continued Miss Marple. "But everything fits in perfectly well if you can only make up your mind what is reality and what is illusion." She added abruptly: "Is Carrie Louise—all right?"

"Yes," said Miss Bellever. "She's all right. But it must have been a shock, you know, finding out that someone wanted to kill her. I mean particularly a shock to *her*, because she doesn't understand violence."

"Carrie Louise understands some things that we don't," said Miss Marple thoughtfully. "She always has."

"I know what you mean—but she doesn't live in the real world."

"Doesn't she?"

Miss Bellever looked at her in surprise. "There never was a more unworldly person than Cara——".

"You don't think that perhaps. . . ." Miss Marple broke off as Edgar Lawson passed them, swinging along at a great pace. He gave a kind of shamefaced nod, but averted his face as he passed.

"I've remembered now who he reminds me of," said Miss Marple. "It came to me suddenly just a few moments ago. He reminds me of a young man called Leonard Wylie. His father was a dentist but he got old and blind and his hand used to shake, and so people preferred to go to the son. But the old man was very miserable about it, and moped, said he was no good for anything any more, and Leonard, who was very soft-hearted and rather foolish, began to pretend he drank more than he should. He always smelt of whisky and he used to sham being rather fuddled when his patients came. His idea was that they'd go back to the father again and say the younger man was no good."

"And did they?"

"Of course not," said Miss Marple. "The patients went to Mr. Reilly, his rival. So many people with good hearts have no sense. Besides, Leonard Wylie was so unconvincing. His idea of drunkenness wasn't in the least like real drunkenness, and he overdid the whisky—spilling it on his clothes, you know, to a perfectly impossible extent."

They went into the house by the side door.

INSIDE the house, they found the family assembled in the library. Lewis was walking up and down and there was an air of general tension in the atmosphere.

"Is anything the matter?" asked Miss Bellever.

Lewis said shortly: "Ernie Gregg is missing from roll-call tonight."

"Has he run away?"

"We don't know. Maverick and some of the staff are searching the grounds. If we cannot find him we must communicate with the police."

"Grandam!" Gina ran over to Carrie Louise, startled by the whiteness of her face. "You look ill."

"I am unhappy. The poor boy. . . ."

Lewis said: "I was going to question him this evening as to whether he had seen anything noteworthy last night. I have the offer of a good post for him, and I thought that after discussing that, I would bring up the other topic. Now. . . ." He broke off.

Miss Marple murmured softly: "Foolish boy. . . . Poor, foolish boy. . . ." She shook her head.

Stephen Restarick came in. He said: "I missed you at the theatre, Gina. I thought you said you would . . . . Hallo, what's up?"

Lewis repeated his information, but before Stephen could comment on it, there was a murmur of voices outside.

The door was flung open and, looking very pale and ill, Dr. Maverick staggered in.

He gasped out: "We've found him—*them*. It's horrible. . . ." He sank down on a chair and mopped his forehead.

Mildred Strete said sharply: "What do you mean—found *them*?"

Maverick was shaking all over.

"Down at the theatre," he said. "Their heads crushed in—the big

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counterweight must have fallen on them. Alex Restarick and that boy Ernie Gregg. They're both dead. . . ."

* * *

Miss Marple said: "I've brought you a cup of strong soup, Carrie Louise. Now, please, drink it."

Mrs. Serrocold sat up in the big, carved oak four-poster bed. She looked very small and childlike. Her cheeks had lost their rose-pink flush, and her eyes had a curiously absent look.

She took the soup obediently from Miss Marple. As she sipped it, Miss Marple sat down in a chair beside the bed.

"First, Christian," said Carrie Louise, "and now Alex—and poor, sharp, silly little Ernie. Did he really—know anything?"

"I don't think so," said Miss Marple. "He was just telling lies—making himself important by hinting that he had seen or knew something. The tragedy is that somebody believed his lies."

Carrie Louise shivered. Her eyes went back to their far-away look. "We meant to do so much for these boys. . . . We did do something. Some of them have done wonderfully well. Several of them are in really responsible positions. A few slid back—that can't be helped. Modern civilized conditions are so complex—too complex for some simple and undeveloped natures. You know Lewis's great scheme? He always felt that transportation was a thing that had saved many a potential criminal in the past. They were shipped overseas, and they made new lives in simpler surroundings. He wants to start a modern scheme on that basis. To buy up a great tract of territory, or a group of islands. Finance it for some years, make it a co-operative, self-supporting community, with everyone having a stake in it. But cut off so that the early temptation to go back to cities and the bad old ways can be neutralized. It's his dream. But it will take a great deal of money, of course, and there aren't many philanthropists with vision now. . . ."

MISS MARPLE picked up a little pair of scissors and looked at them curiously. "What an odd pair of scissors," she said. "They've got two finger-holes on one side and one on the other."

Carrie Louise's eyes came back from that frightening far distance.

"Alex gave them to me this morning," she said. "They're supposed to make it easier to cut your right-hand nails. Dear boy, he was so enthusiastic. He made me try them then and there."

"And I suppose he gathered up the nail-clippings and took them tidily away," said Miss Marple.

"Yes," said Carrie Louise. "He——" She broke off. "Why did you say that?"

"I was thinking about Alex. He had brains. Yes, he had brains."

"You mean—that's why he died?"

"I think so—yes."

"He and Ernie—it doesn't bear thinking about. When do they think it happened?"

"Late this evening. Between six and seven o'clock, probably. . . ."

"After they'd knocked off work?"

"Yes."

Gina had been down there that evening—and Wally Hudd. Stephen, too, said he had been down to look for Gina. . . . But as far as that went, anybody could have——

Miss Marple's train of thought was interrupted.

Carrie Louise said quietly and unexpectedly: "How much do you know, Jane?"

Miss Marple looked up sharply. The eyes of the two women met. Miss Marple said slowly: "If I was quite sure. . . ."

"I think you are sure, Jane."

Jane Marple said slowly: "What do you want me to do?"

Carrie leaned back against her pillows. "It is in your hands, Jane—you'll do what you think right." She closed her eyes.

"Tomorrow"—Miss Marple hesitated—"I shall have to try and talk to Inspector Curry—if he'll listen. . . ."

To be concluded next week

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"I always say there's nothing like a good sound thatch when it comes to keeping rain out"

TEN POUNDS AND A FEATHER BED

Continued from page 18

the fresh marsh anyways and launch her northward of the ship——"

"Then go you back and get your own horse, I tell you."

"But it's your turn, Fairbairn. There's a hurry, man!"

Susy had recognized the speaker, Ted Watson, whose farm was nearer the sea than Fred's, right on the Marston marshes.

"I said I'd bring the horse, Fred," he went on. "I'll take her, if you want."

"You leave the blessed horse alone," yelled Fred angrily. "My turn or no, my horses aren't going. They'd better push her along theirselves, one, two, three heave," he said.

"For God's sake," Susy whispered under her breath. "Standing there, arguing as if they'd got all day, and the men, poor souls, drowning as like as not." She was throwing on her clothes. She heard the voices going on, bluffing backwards and forwards in the wind. Susy slipped down the back stairs, lit a storm lantern in the kitchen, put on an oilskin of Fred's and went out towards the stables. She knew which horse she would take: Mollie, who was amenable and would act quickly.

The mare coughed and blew and stamped her frilled feet.

"Here, get over, do," Susy said, pushing her broadside. She put on the collar and traces. She took down the bridle and bit from their peg. It was always a struggle for her, getting them to take the bit: she was so short, and these great, tall cart horses. . . . Mollie raised her head and pulled away.

"Come on, oh, come you on," Susy said, nearly crying.

The bit rattled against Mollie's teeth. Susy flung herself on to the mare from the mounting block and clattered her out of the yard. In the lane there was no sign of Watson. Either he had gone in despair to sacrifice one of his own horses, or he was still standing there arguing with Freddy, the great idiot. Mollie's willing trot was slackening, now her surprise was over.

"Goo on," Susy yelled, bringing her hand down in a great stinging slap on the mare's rump.

She lumbered into the road at a heavy canter. They crossed the village street. Susy turned the mare into the lane leading to the marshes, and when she got on to the grass path, Mollie went along at a good pace, tossing up her head now and then into the wind. Susy's face was wet with the tears the wind drew, her hands as cold as ice on the reins.

She reached the boathouse at the head of the next creek to find the men had run the boat out on its wheels.

"My God, Fairbairn, we thought you was never coming." The coxswain sounded angry with anxiety.

"I came as quick as I could," Susy said, leaping off.

"You, Miss!"

They harnessed the mare and set straight off along the marsh.

Susy dropped back and looked out to sea. In a sudden, short lull in the tempest, she heard the forlorn sound of voices calling for help.

She went back to the boathouse. It seemed a long, long time that she was there, dodging out to see the lights of the ship and the lifeboat, dancing together and apart endlessly. Other people from the village came down with curious, grave faces, the news having somehow got round. While they watched, the dawn broke, and with the dawn the storm dropped a little.

It was light when the lifeboat moored again in the creek, on the full tide. Susy, leading the mare, reached the shore as the wounded were being brought up. The lifeboat crew supported the wrecked men with arms round their waists, under their armpits. One boy was carried, unconscious, having had a blow on the head. As he passed her, Susy saw his face. It was Sammy. . . .

Susy managed to snatch an hour or two's sleep, and was woken up by Aunt Lottie. "Here's two things, Susy dear. Your father's fallen, wedging the window in the shop, and broken his leg. I wonder what'll be the third. There's bound to be a third. Misfortunes always come in threes, always." Her aunt said this so firmly that Susy suggested to the Almighty as she put on her clothes, that the third might not affect her or Sam, but could well be laid outside someone else's door.

FRED was surly, tucking her into the trap, ashamed of last night, she knew. They clopped along in silence, the sea steely and grey on their left. He lifted her down outside the shop, but didn't wait once he'd put her down.

Her father was wrapped up on the large leather couch in the parlour off the kitchen, and she set about attending him.

She went round to the Rose and Crown in the evening to get brandy for her father. As she came into the warm bar, the talk stopped. Susy fiddled with her bonnet-strings, keeping her eyes on the ground.

"Well, and here's the little heroine, come home," Gus said, laying his palms flat on the bar and letting out his whistling breath. "We heard all about it, my dear," he said. "How a sartin person wouldna lend his horse, and a sartin young woman took it from under his nose, tempest and all, and the boat got out and the poor devils was saved, and one partickler varmint among them, eh?"

There were chuckles and grunts of appreciation all round. Some of the men began to stamp their feet and laugh and cheer.

"All the same," said someone, when the talk was general again, "I don't like the way this 'ere wind's rousing again. Highest tide of the month will be early tomorrow. If that there nor'-westerly don't give over tonight we'll have a time of it tomorrow. Mark my words."

Susy slipped out, alarmed. In the doorway she met Jim, in his jersey, boots and oilskins.

"Well, Susy, my dear," he said, "we owe you a devil of a lot. Sam's back."

"Is he all right?"

"Sound as a bell. Perhaps he'll walk round and see you, Susy, some time?" He pinched her cheek.

"All right. Tomorrow," she said, "when he's better."

"I'll tell him."

The next morning Susy was dressed early, listening to the wind. It blew still in the same direction, from the north-west, right onshore. She never remembered the sea coming up the street as far as their house. At Creak it happened every year or so, for the village lay much lower than Snetterley. The inhabitants had a regular routine, sandbags against low windows and

"Mummy, Nancy's giving her boy friend my Cydrax..."

"Don't worry, Dear . . .
there are 5 big glasses in every bottle!"

"—He's had two already!"

He evidently knows a good thing when he tastes it! Doubtless the clean, clear, *thirst-quenching* tang of those famous Devonshire apples has something to do with its zestful reception . . . but *whatever* the reasons for its popularity, one thing is certain . . .

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"While you're up—would you look at the roast, give the peas a stir, salt the potatoes, make some coffee, open a small tin of peaches, and lay the table, dear?"

doors, all the furniture upstairs, and God help the carpets.

She stood in the kitchen, uneasily, wondering what to do, listening. There was suddenly a lot of shouting and noise from near the quay. Footsteps came clattering up the street, into her yard.

"Susy!"

"Sam."

"The water's coming over," he bawled. "We'll have to get your father upstairs, somehow. Here, I'll take the heavy end." Sam had gathered George, half asleep and protesting feebly, into his blanket. "Get you hold of the foot end, Susy."

Susy staggered up the narrow stairs, her heart bursting. They got the old man on to the bed. The cat had followed and was up on the sill. Susy remembered her father's parrot, covered with his plush cloth, in the cage in the shop.

"Here, Susy, come back. Where are you going?" Sam yelled, following her.

She seized the cage and was turning with it when the shop door burst open. Down the high step the water poured and swirled, sweeping Susy and the cage before it into the kitchen, to the foot of the stairs, where Sam caught her and dragged her up.

"You little fool," he said. "If that door had hung the other way—now you're wet," he added.

Susy went to change her skirt and leaned out of the window at the back. The water splashed idly against the wall of the yard and her father's big store-house. A tin basin banged and doddered on the wall till it filled and sank. Several tea-chests jostled together afloat.

My heavens, she thought, the mess: the coal all washed about the kitchen, the parlour carpet. But at the back of her mind, beneath the disrupting details of the flood, there lay one immense fact, beautiful and disturbing. Sam was here, in the house with her.

There was a knock at her door.

"I think your father's in a doze," Sam said, coming in. "He got that excited, poor man, about his stock being spoilt."

"And I can't go down and get anyone a cup of tea, or anything else," Susy said.

"No, you can't move," said Sam firmly, "and no more can't I. No one can't come in neither, not for the moment," he added, piling up his negatives in Norfolk fashion to emphasize this satisfying fact.

She was silent, her cheek against the cold bed-knob.

"Why was it you ran away, Susy? I felt a pretty fool, my dear. It weren't till I thought my end had come last night that I wished I'd forgiven you."

"I thought it was me that was looking the fool," she said.

"What d'you mean?"

"I saw your name, Sammy, in father's book, as paying back the ten pounds. I thought you only wanted me because you owed the money."

"Susy," he said, pulling her to her feet, "if I have more words about that blessed money, I'll throw you out of the window into the flood, I will an' all."

"I saw your name," she said again, "and I don't know what came over me. I'm sorry, Sam, I made you look so foolish." For it now seemed inconceivable that she should ever have mistrusted Sam, whatever the explanation about the money.

"Why didn't you ask your father? He'd have told you. Now I will. Jimmy owed that money to him, since nearly two years ago."

"Jimmy?"

"Jimmy. You remember the April storms that lost him his crab-pots, the whole blessed lot? Well, your father was so kind as to lend it to Jimmy to set him up in pots again. Jimmy didn't pay it back when he said he would and your father put up one of his notices. And then, just about the same time, he put up the notice about you."

She nodded.

"Well, Jimmy came to me smiling all over his face and said he was a-going to have that money even if it meant having you, too. That's what he said, sweetheart. I hate to have to tell you. He thought you were easy to get, because everyone could see you liked him."

"Yes, I did," she said, smiling to remember it.

"Well, maybe. I'm not saying he aren't all right, old Jimmy. But I knew very well he didn't love you," Sam raised his voice. "So I offered him the ten pounds if he'd let me have you," Sam shouted, "as I'd always intended, though I don't say it didn't bring me on quicker. As soon as I got it, I paid his debt, see? And what's more, girl, as soon as I could after you jilted me, I paid your father back out of my savings, so it cost me ten pounds, Susy. As for the blessed feather bed," he roared, "it's in our house with no one to sleep on it except me, and he can have that back, too, if he likes——" He stopped, shaking her shoulders gently.

"Unless," he went on, in a quieter voice, full of laughter, "you'd like to claim your share of it?"

There was a long, long silence. George Goodchild, woken up from his nap by Sam's roaring in the next room, wondered why it should suddenly cease. It occurred to him that Susy, having nowhere else to entertain Sam, must be entertaining him in her bedroom, which he considered outrageous. Also, his leg hurt him and he was hungry and worried.

"Susy!" he called, rattling his bedpost, "Susy! Answer me! What's going on in there? If you don't answer I shall come and see. Leaving me all alone in a flood," he finished craftily.

THE END

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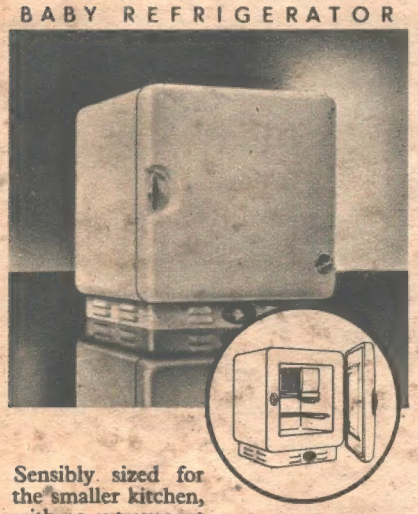

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'THREE THREES'

CIGARETTES

10 for 1/9½ 20 for 3/7

MADAME MAKES CAKES FOR THE FAMOUS

Continued from page 11

weddings, parties and dinners for embassies, business concerns, professional organizations and military associations all over the country.

Cakes are the product for which madame is best known. A leading cosmetics firm turned to her for a cake for its fiftieth anniversary. She produced a model of a chintz-covered dressing-table bearing the firm's cosmetics. Everything was edible.

When Noël Coward wanted a cake for a celebration connected with his production, *Sigh No More*, madame made it in the shape of a stage. On it was a reel of film, a musical score, a dramatic mask, a book and other objects symbolizing the Coward success story; on the backcloth were the titles of his plays.

Replica Of Big Ben

One of the most elaborate cakes madame has produced was a circus with the ring full of performers; one of the largest was a replica of Big Ben, made for a watchmakers' anniversary.

In all these special designs, madame insists on scrupulous attention to detail. Exact drawings were taken of the Churchill Arch and of Big Ben. For the Reuter centenary a cake was modelled like the news agency's Fleet Street office. "When we went to make the drawings the genariums were in bloom on the front of the building, so we put them on the cake." (Genariums is an indication of the struggle she still has with the English language, after living here for twenty years.)

With wedding cakes madame is happiest if the customer agrees to leave the design to her. "Then we try to find out, discreetly, something about the couple. Would they like a serious or light design? Also, we try to find something about their interests, to use them in the design if it is possible."

For instance, a cake for the wedding of an actress and a caterer incorporated a comedy mask and a chef's hat. For a Greek shipowner's daughter, madame made each of the three tiers in the shape of the Parthenon, and topped them with an icing model of an ancient Greek statue. And for one of Sir Alan Lascelles's musically minded daughters, she had the music of Mendelssohn's wedding march done in icing round the tiers.

Such decoration takes about a week. If a customer desires a conventional design, madame will generally oblige.

One thing she does baulk at is the "boy-and-girl" decoration. "It is so crude. I ask the people to go somewhere else. I have my name and reputation to consider." How much customers pay for a cake bearing that name varies considerably, but for a moderately elaborate wedding cake the charge is around 8s. 6d. a pound.

Got Bored In York

Maria Floris's career in the confectionery business began with her husband in Budapest. In 1932, a British chocolate manufacturer brought Floris to York. After two years there, madame recalls, "I got bored. So I came to London."

She intended making only special expensive flour confectionery to be sold wholesale to department stores. Willy-nilly, she soon found herself with a growing retail trade, for the stores' directors and their friends came to her when they wanted the big cake for the big occasion.

Madame has now spent thirty years in the trade, in Britain and on the Continent, in peacetime plenty and postwar austerity, but there is one thing she confesses she will never understand. Illogically, she says: "Sometimes I watch a fine wedding or birthday cake going out of the shop, and it almost break my heart. I cannot think how people can bear to cut it and eat it up." THE END

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

The photograph on page 22 is of Ted Heath, when a child, with his mother.

WIN £500, FAMILY HOLIDAY and SUNSHINE GUARANTEE!

OPPORTUNITY knocked for works maintenance foreman W. Jackson (83 Brewerton Road, Oldham). He took it and won £500 plus Family Seaside Holiday in *Bullets*. In June, he and his wife, with their children, Susan, Andrew and Adrian, will enjoy a glorious seaside week at his chosen resort — Butlin's holiday camp at Filey. They will stay there as JOHN BULL'S guests, covered by a £100 Sunshine Guarantee.

Now, *your* opportunity knocks! Win any of this week's three chief cheques for a *Bullet* and a Family Seaside Holiday with Sunshine Guarantee will also be *yours*. Since the war, 374 readers and their companions have enjoyed seaside holidays won for *Bullets* entered on a coupon such as yours below. *Use it!*

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£100 SUNSHINE GUARANTEE

For full details of this unique Guarantee for *Bullets* Holiday winners see this week's *Bulletin*.

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Whole Roast Chicken, Ham and Tongue (all tinned) accompany each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

OTHER PRIZES: £10, £9, £8, £7, £6, 2 of £5, 10 of £2 10s., 50 of 10s., 1,500 "Good Shots".

HOW TO WIN

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

In The World's Garden
We Can't Afford
With Russia
Financial Crisis
Bewildered Man
Behind Bars
Something Tells Her
A Musical Evening
Lovely To Dream About
Out First Ball
Talks
Against The Rules
To Produce More
What They're Playing
Her Cup Of Tea
With One Look
Hiram Reached London And
Seaside Killjoy
Where To Stop
When Grandpa Went Racing

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

The ..... Industry
Thing To .....
Why The ..... Was Late
..... Works Hard, But
How The ..... Ran
Takes All My .....

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,836 (or Xword 788) "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated June 21, and in JOHN BULL dated June 28); also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

"Bullets" Winners 1,831

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Mediterranean Cruise: J. E. Hurley, "Pyrcot," North Street, Williton, Taunton:

Good v. Evil

The Grapple Since "Apple."

£50: Miss P. Thomas, 124 Broad Street, Barry: ONE OF THE WORLD'S FRAGMENTS—MAY REACH MOON *First*!

£25: W. Graham, Schoolhouse, 7 Ruberslaw Road, Burnfoot, Hawick: IDLE HANDS—THE "OLD CURSE."

OTHER AWARDS. £10: W. Whitaker, 65 Conway Road, Treorchy: SURROUNDED BY FEARS—FORTIFICATIONS, AND *Friends*—RUSSIA! £10: R. J. Wood, 18 Cyprus Avenue, Johnstone, Renfrewshire: READY FOR THE GREAT — ADVENTURE — GENTLE, TIMID GRANDMA. £5: J. B. Beggs, 73 Hillmount Gardens, Finaghy, Belfast: READY FOR THE NEXT—CAMPERS, VANDALS LEFT *Farmer*! £5: Mrs. G. M. Martin, 38 Alexandra Road, Muswell Hill, N.10: ONE OF THE WORLD'S REASONS—FOR "FLOUNDERING," JOE'S "DEPTH." £5: W. N. Ogden, 56 Church Drive, North Harrow: WE CUT AND CUT, BUT—"CUT ABOVE" CUTTING *Obligations*. £5: R. Roulston, 3 Northfield Road, Milford-on-Sea, Hants: GOOD V. EVIL—*And* ALL THE "NEUTRALS." £5: C. H. Welch, 54 Copthorne Avenue, Bromley: READY FOR THE ROAD—BACK, THE NEW PANZERS?

For ten winners of £2 10s. see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

50 Prizes of 10s. and 2,000 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

RIVIERA HOLIDAYS in next week's JOHN BULL!

NEW SUMMER PRIZES FOR XWORDS!

This Way To Win

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 788

1. Isn't likely to worry burglar
3. One kind is used for keeping water out
5. People are bound to associate festivals with these
8. Poor this might prevent you selling your television set
9. To do this with a virus may be best way of fighting an epidemic
14. It may be difficult to get out of the way of one that threatens you
15. When buying these, see that split ones aren't put in with the rest

Down Clues

2. Trial of them reveals how sharp they are
4. Should not be relied upon for protection
6. One respects a man who struggles and pays back every penny he owes without this
7. A team's opening batsmen shouldn't be
10. One may have to be lifted
11. Rival schools of music frequently lead to conflicting ones
12. Friendly this may ease strained relations between two people
13. A man who's this is often highly entertaining

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Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated June 14.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

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